

RAIN

M A G A Z I N E



RAIN

MAGAZINE

SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY

SPRING 2006

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I heard it first,
as I slept,
and it tapped its way into my dreams.
I heard it second,
as I awakening, found the soft silkiness of my someone,
and we lay intertwined
as it, jazz-like, beat a rhythm on the windows,
until the rude reality of the alarm clock drowned it.
I heard it third,
drumming at the window,
falling on the finches at the feeders,
as I sipped coffee.
I heard it fourth,
at my screen door,
pulsing wetly on the cedar-slatted porch.
I heard it fifth,
red rubber shoes splashing my footsteps,
retrieving a soggy newspaper.
Five times,
I can say, "I heard the rain."
The rest of the time I paid no attention.

I rarely looked out my floathouse window without thinking about how the water seemed to be breathing. The bay rose and gently fell on calm days when it was not being whipped by the wind or tide. I often imagined if you laid a large group of people on their backs, close to one another and looked out over them, their chests would rise and fall in much the same way.

I had time to imagine these things when I lived in bush Alaska. The wildness and beauty of the place can change the most hardened city slicker. It changed me. Although my first impressions of Alaska's elemental lifestyle were hard to adjust to, the North grew on me and in time, made me a part of its wild simplicity.

Point Baker, Alaska sits clinging to the thin strip of land available between the water of Sumner Strait and the vast Tongass National Forest right on the northern tip of Prince of Wales Island. This beach-land is so tenuous it seems the water and the trees are competing to see who can push over the houses first. The houses lay next to one another, all facing the water with their backs to the trees. The only way in or out was by slow boat or tiny floatplane. With only seventeen houses, just forty-two people call Point Baker home.

When I arrived in Alaska, I was looking for adventure. I was following my boyfriend, Jeff, (later my husband, now my ex-husband) who told me if I wanted to stay with him, I'd better pack. I was a city girl. I had no intention of staying up North longer than the summer. Jeff, a fish buyer and deckhand, had lived and worked summers in Point Baker for two years. He procured for me one of the two jobs in town: working in the bar/ restaurant/ grocery store/ fuel dock as the bartender/ waitress/ cook/ grocery store clerk/ fuel attendant.

The bar was floating, tied to the town dock and, in an especially violent storm years before I got there, had cracked in half. Each side of the building sloped away from the middle such that you entered the front door going uphill and walked to the back of the building going down. The back part of the building, where the bar was located, was at such an extreme angle that it was hanging underwater just enough to have a constant pool under the TV and along the back wall. Nobody minded this arrangement because if you had too much to drink and you could make it up the hill out of the bar, it was all downhill out the door.

I did not fit in. Everyone was kind, but I can imagine what they thought: "She'll

never make five minutes here.” They were almost right. The first time I saw the sixteen by twenty-foot, one-room cabin that was to be my home for the next three months, I sat down and cried. The place had running water, but it was always cold, and the toilet just sat there in one corner, squatting by the front door, the first object to greet me when I came in. Thankfully the summer was busy with lots of fishermen and late nights in the bar, hearing their stories and them hearing mine. It kept my mind off the huge changes I had made. “I left a great apartment and job,” I’d think. “What the hell am I doing here?”

The fishermen were a friendly group. The water provided almost everything for them: their food, their livelihood. Even logs that floated by were tied up and hauled in to be burned in wood stoves that stayed stoked all summer. As I listened to them talk, I began to realize they were not at all like me. They did not worry about the latest trends or what some movie star did on their vacation. They talked about fish. They talked about the price of fish, what tide would yield the most fish, who was “on the fish”, and more talk about the price of fish. Their banter seemed boring and tedious to me at first. I mean who sits around and talks about fish all day? Well, apparently these guys did, and it didn’t take too long before I began to figure out why.

I began to see that all life in Point Baker depends on fish. Humans are not the true top of the food chain there. When the fish don’t come, the people don’t eat. I soon realized this reality included me as well. This was the first time I had seen life pared down to its most elemental parts. Because of this pared-down approach to life, the people of Point Baker don’t waste their time on the latest fad. There is too much to do getting ready to fish, fishing, and then cleaning up after fishing. These people were in touch with what was really important. As the summer passed, I learned to appreciate this simple way of life. I still wanted to leave it, but I could appreciate it.

Then the summer ended. A friend decided to move to Colorado and asked if we would like to move into her floathouse, which was a two-story and about five times the size of the cabin. She wouldn’t charge us rent if we would just keep it standing. No mean feat. This house had no running water or electricity, but did have interior walls, which seemed such a luxury after a one-room cabin. I surprised myself by agreeing to stay. “O.K.,” I said, “I’ll try it for one winter, but then I am going home.” I stayed for six years.

During the summers, I continued to tend bar, flip burgers, pump gas, and listen to fishing stories. I listened to the fishermen speak of cork lines, lead lines, spun props, and getting corked. They spoke of longline gear, stabies, flashers, and hand crank-ing. I heard tale of sockeye, dog, humpies, and kings. At first, I had no idea what

they were talking about. Over six years, I figured it out.

Winters had lessons of another kind. Necessity taught me how to run a chainsaw. Comfort taught me to always keep my boots dry. Practicality taught me to conserve my water supply. I learned that gathering and preparing food, hauling water, and chopping wood can consume all of the short daylight hours.

On the days when the wood, water, and food supplies did not need tending, I would visit the new people I met. Virginia and Tom lived on a boat tied to the dock. Tom played the mandolin, and Virginia made the best tasting beans I ever had. Jeff lived almost completely on the land; Herb and Judy had a satellite dish. Ute was from Germany. Another Judy made beautiful art comprised of thousands of tiny dots. Sam carved in his spare time; Paul built his own boat. One night, Jerry's house caught fire and the whole town showed up to put it out. When we realized it was a total loss, Jerry handed around some Pall Malls and warm Old Milwaukee beers and we watched it burn. As the long, dark winter nights and neverending summer days progressed, I began to change.

One day, about two years into my time in Point Baker, my good friend, Ute, called and asked if I would deckhand in her place on the Judy Lee, our friend's boat. This was Ute's regular summertime job, but she was feeling sick, and Bill really needed help. I agreed to go. We would fish from Sunday to Thursday, as close to 24/7 as humanly possible. Over the five long days as a deckhand on the Judy Lee, I began to see what all the boys in the bar had been talking about. I learned to clean fish and surprised Bill by gutting and icing all the salmon on deck during the steam back to town. I watched how the net rolled off the drum, and why it was important not to wear jewelry. I learned what it meant to get coked. I smelled, I cursed, and I made a lot of money.

When I came back from my fishing trip, I was different. Now I could join in on the conversation. Now, I could tell a good fish story. The bar guys and I knew that one trip does not a fisherman make, but they were impressed with the girl from "down south." I was too.

The years slipped by. The conversations continued. The fish showed up some years, and some years they didn't. I beach-combed fallen red cedar, had it milled into siding, and nailed it onto the house. I hauled water. One winter night, I stood terrified as the breakwater in front of my house broke and sent waves crashing over my porch of planks and float logs. Another winter, I came home from a trip to California to find my fish tank frozen solid and all of my begonias dead. I sat in my neighbors'

homes, warmed by fire and friendship, listened to music, and spoke of fish, among other things. I attended parties on docks and rocky beaches. I peed in a bucket.

When my friend from Colorado decided to come back to claim her home, the place on the cove was still standing, thanks to us. Jeff and I were pregnant with our first child. Fishing jobs were taking him away for long periods of time. When Jeff got a job offer in Baker City, Oregon working in industrial construction, the money was good. His mother was nearby to help with the baby. We decided to leave Point Baker.

Having spent so much time at the beginning of my Alaska experience wanting to leave, I was surprised by how badly I wanted to stay. By this time, without realizing it, I had become accustomed to this elemental life; it scared me to think of leaving. My house didn't even have a lock on the door. I knew two feuding fishermen who hadn't talked to one another in years, but when one fell in the icy water late at night, the other risked his own life to save his enemy's life. It didn't end their feud. Would that happen anywhere else?

Would I be able to sit on my front porch, eating a bowl of cornflakes and watch a humpback whale breach his body completely out of the water? Would the stillness of any other winter night have that special tranquility which can only be achieved when there is only the sound of water after the generators shut down for the night. I had learned to run a chainsaw, to can salmon and venison, to survive and enjoy long cold winters, to appreciate a true friend. In short, I had become Alaskan. Leaving Point Baker broke my heart; I felt gutted like those salmon on the Judy Lee. Eight years later, I would return to that rocky inlet in a minute if I could. It is true what they say; leaving Alaska is easier than getting back. But then again, a part of me will always be there, soaring with the eagles, blowing through the Sitka spruce, breathing with the water.



Hillside tan and green from heavy rain.
Blazes of mustard punctuate afternoon landscape.
A buzzard circles high overhead--from above,
The countryside must seem pretty.

For seven miles, hard road curves and climbs into foothills,
Soft and laced with stumpy scrub and gnarled oak.
Red-fleshed Madrona flash in rich sunlight.
You are never far.

Lavender paints the roadside and
Scotch Broom with yellow seeking eyes.
While you, arm draped casually on the windowsill,
Allow California sunshine to burnish your fair skin.

Higher on the mountain redwood and
Gray barked fir. The eyrth
Is rich and lustrous
I feel you everywhere.

Cresting the summit,
You drive skillfully and fast,
Chasing the sun.
You are your father's girl.

A small stream snakes down-mountain,
Blue and quicksilver with traces of yellow-gold.
Ponderosa and dogwood charge by.
You drive into mid-day sun.

Daylight paints our backside with cool dark shadow.
Round river stones languish in docile mountain streams,
California dreaming. You
Are always with me.

I reach out
Wind rustles golden hair.
Dusty clay lifts from the roadside,
Swirls and flies away.

Might have jumped that freight train out of Portland,
That day, that summer, with Rascal, when we were nineteen.

Might have piggybacked on that boxcar to Jackson Hole or Abilene,
Or anyplace, a thousand miles from *here*.
Escaped the long hard Oregon rain.

Might have stole away and headed into the Southwest.
Teetered on dizzy-high canyon rims, vistas that ricocheted
Bright gilded dreams
Like slick packaged advertisements
Offering enlightenment without guarantees.

I retreated home that summer and worked in a bookstore,
And he never offered again, though the trains continued
To crisscross desert and mountain as sure as night shadow,
Fording mighty rivers, colors lustrous as a cat's green eyes,
Luminescent as moonstones.

Rascal traveled a sinuous path,
Slept in silver-hued barns and deserted schoolhouses;
Slept in dry culverts that promised baptism, or under rickety wooden Bridges, dusty
timbers silhouetting bronze skies
As steady as a cowboy's gaze.

And sometime that summer I imagined a freckle-faced angel,
Feeding Rascal sweet Iowa corn, or ruby-red Washington apples,
Or Maine lobsters that extruded sweet ocean nectar and sticky
Yellow butter, coating his fingers until he sucked them clean,
Until he sped along on the next train to the next town. Alone.

Some nights he kissed the faces of honey-lipped women, comely strangers
Who materialized out of desolate backwaters, almost apparitions by the following week
or the next,
Along the way.

Along the way a man clamors for the sound
Of a train whistle. Hears distinct whistle stops
As clear as catcalls, as if crystalline sound ferrets out
Medieval dream chambers, shaping itself like terra cotta,
Or a Protestant fugue. Rain subdues shrill engine calls
And silent foggy nights carry them:
Sounds that bray like hunger or longing.

"Hey Rascal!" His real name was Dick:
Dicky, Dicky, Dicky,
The same song steel wheels play out
Crossing nightline. *Dickity, dickity, dickidy,*
Tap-dancing between here and Billings, then beyond,
Sharp as sexy jazz notes, the high spiritual sigh of a solo saxophone,
Wailing like miserly wind. Or elation he felt,
Traveling alone, a hobo warrior.

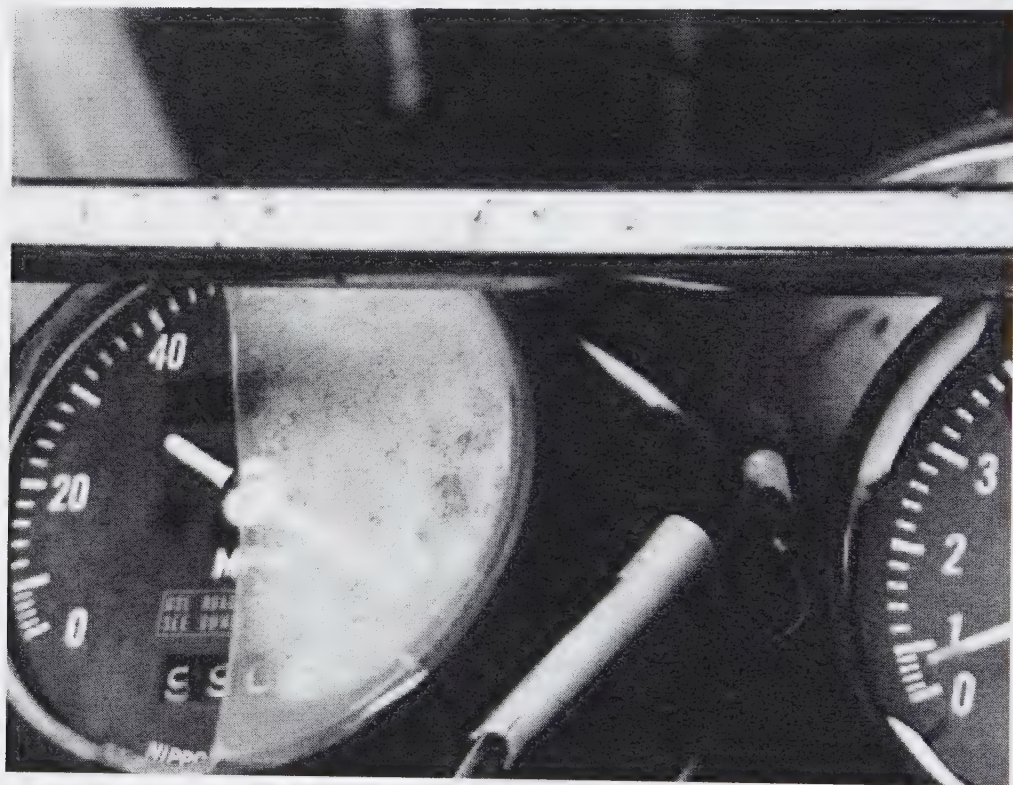
Traveling: Some night hobos danced by firelight,
Their jeans sagging with chalky Georgia clay,
Teardrops and disappointment. But they sang
Hillbilly ballads, anyway. Drank
Bad whiskey and invented lies
About loose women or fantasy conquests that
Only blind men chose to hear or believe.
Rascal squatted there, sharing a pot of Mexican beans,
Redolent with heat of Chipotle peppers,
Or rice cooked in a three pound MJB coffee can over open fire,
Scraps the rest of us throw away.
Booze poured rough and burned his throat, but Rascal didn't care.
In three months he would be back in school.

His stories and poems and rich guitar music
Stole away the hearts of the pretty young women we boys all wanted.
Stole away my heart too.
Many nights in Oregon, I dreamed a hobo fandango.

Somewhere high above some canyon rim, I imagined
The siren song of an engine whistle,
A mighty freight train nicknamed *Wanderlust*.

Still a poem junkie
stealing alone from the home
and housing it in pages, this
stillness drenched in full moon
quenches the wrenching of wrists
working oil into time-kissed pens
sinking ink into cages of rhythm
schisms and abysmal thoughts bleed
between the dark marks of paper-thin tree bone
and continue like a word mill, popped pill
flunky of expression, testing the stillness of waxing words
and waning wisdom, wishing to still fit in
tight as midnight denim, with exact line breaks
and utter acceptance of what this act will take.

Men are made of clay by an unseen hand.
I believe this because I am.
There are memories of when I was a rock,
hard against, hard to be against.
For an age I was gravel, hard and sharp and coarse,
but mostly just underfoot.
I wanted to be cobble smooth so I let myself be loved
and worn.
And then I was sand.
Sand isn't clay anymore.



Four kinds of guys
who use it:

Sexy
rolls it up his shiny legs

Desperate
pulls it over his stubbly face

Skunk trapper
fills it with peanut butter
and hides it in a cage

and

Lazy
just sticks it in his poems

It is clear one's life has simplified
when it becomes the social high point
of the week. The Bookmobile

man (who's name I don't even know),
one's most frequent, extra-familial
interlocutor. Every Wednesday

at five, the bus rolls into town.
My daughter gathers our tower
of books in eager arms (*It's here!*)

she says, looking down from our hilltop),
and we set out like traders for the outpost
of new ideas. The whole world,

I suspect, should be like the Bookmobile.
Nothing in excess, enough for everyone –
kindly limited and predetermined

by unseen hands. Two dozen cookbooks,
one rack for CDs, novels on a single
proud stand. No more bad news

than will fit in a 12-inch stack.
When we exit the Bookmobile,
it is sunset. The sky unfurls a pageant

of pink to herald evening, time
for food and rest, for scattering our
books, like rose petals, on the bed.

Moving along slick rocks
smoothed by licking waves
listening to roaring surf
rise
and
fall

The surging froth
pulling sand
back to the ocean's icy hold
Snails, moving seaward
slowly
slowly
slowly

Kids hold twisted sticks
draw abstractions into
gray sand canvas.
That flood tides will soon erase.

Dark sails squat on the horizon
Pushed by invisible winds
sailing to unknown ports

Gulls screech and squawk
while pipers skitter along surf lines

An absurdity of soul-less Coke can
bent, half buried in windswept sands

Some nights if I am up, can't sleep, I see Annie's Tavern closing about two, and red tail lights, and turning headlights making lefts onto Marine and

then it goes dark, only the lighted entry-square alive, but the Home Bakery string of windows on the side, I surmise where the baking gets done goes on. Trucks come and go all night long, but about three and

four, there is often a silence, later, pink light outlines the peninsula to the south east, and truckers coming into town pull up across from the bakery, and I think they have been thinking for miles coming in on Highway 30 about stopping at the Home Bakery for coffee and donuts or

Danish, or cinnamon bread, and that they do this every morning, and that they have been doing this for many years, and that the place is well known to truckers, and they all have it on their gustatorial

maps and it makes their days a little sweeter, and I imagine the same women wait on them and know their preferences, and the men feel young and tough. They are the first string of arrivals, by nine to ten

the old men arrive to talk, drink, and kid each other in a slow way, joking, friendly, sure that they are the original bedrock of the town. It is an honored place. Everyone knows it. They get respect.



Many stories have been told of these events but the grandmother, who is very wise and very, very old, told this story just as her great, great, grandmother told it to her... this story...the story of the dragon's eyes.

At the top of a tall mountain in Japan was a monastery called the Temple of the Clouds. It was so high up on the mountainside that the pilgrims visiting the temple had to pass through the clouds to reach their destination.

At the base of the mountain was a village. It was a prosperous village as the road to the temple passes right through it; and since the distance up and down the mountain took most all of the day, the pilgrims needed a place to rest and refresh before returning to their homes.

The innkeeper was the most prosperous man in the town. In his family were seven round-faced sons and an eighth child, a daughter, who was small and thin and plain. The seven round-faced sons made the man proud for they showed the world how prosperous he was. When he heard the news that his wife would have an eighth child, he boasted to everyone in the village that he would give a great banquet in honor of his wife because she always gave him sons.

Soon the time came and the eighth child was delivered. When the seven round-faced brothers saw their new sister for the first time, they said,

"Oh, Mother, this is not a round-faced brother. This is a monkey."

The innkeeper said, "Seven times you have honored me. Why now do you bring me shame with this ugly child?"

The innkeeper's wife said nothing but held her daughter close and whispered to the child of her mother's love and of the great things she would one day do.

The mother could not bear that she had failed her husband. She named the child Misako, which means beautiful, clever child, and then the mother died.

The innkeeper married again. He married a woman who was vain and thoughtless. She cared only for the luxury that he could provide for her. She enjoyed being called mother of seven sons but she had no love for little Misako, who was not lovely or

round but instead rather plain and small. Misako was given a place to sleep with the swine and the chickens.

As Misako grew she was curious about everything. Her stepmother would often find her halfway through some task or another sitting all by herself with a far away look in her large black eyes. The child would then be scolded for being lazy and for not paying close enough attention to her chores. Misako, however, would just bow politely and complete her task without comment. She so seldom spoke that her brothers thought her stupid and called her names. No one knew that the wind told her stories of far away places, that the rain shared secrets of what was to be or that the darkness comforted her at night.

One day a procession came through the village. The greatest painter of all time was to visit the Temple of the Clouds. He had been commissioned to paint four dragons on a newly completed wall. The dragons were a symbol of abundance, good fortune and prosperity. All knew that the dragons controlled the rivers, the seas and the rain. They were to be honored on the temple wall.

The painter stopped at the inn and the innkeeper and his wife gave him their very best room.

Late that night, the stepmother called Misako to her.

"You must arise earlier than usual, lazy girl, for you must complete your chores and then you are needed to serve another. Master Zhang Seng-yao, the great painter, needs eight to carry for him when he goes to temple. Your brothers have the honor to carry his brushes and paints, his canvas and pencils, his knife, his box and his scroll. Then they will return for they have duties here. We have no eighth son so you will have to carry his water pail. You will stay at the temple until his work is done. You will keep his water fresh and clean from the Dragon Well outside the temple. Do not speak and show yourself a fool and make sure you do not spill a drop."

So Misako spent her days toiling up and down the mountain and making sure the great painter always had clean water for his use. She never spoke. She never complained but she did watch everything with her big black eyes.

Time passed. The painter planned and painted. Misako kept his water clean. The painter saw that the child worked hard and never complained. He began to talk to her of his plans for the wall. He showed her how he applied the colors, the green, the red and the brilliant gold. He told her stories of the dragons.

At night when the painter slept, Misako would stand by the wall and speak softly to the dragons. The stars would answer, the moon would smile and the night would comfort Misako in her loneliness.

But all was not well in the village. The rain had ceased to fall. The land became dry and the people became ill. The plants had no water and so would produce no food. The people were hungry. It was a terrible time of sickness and of famine.

The people from the village came to the temple and pleaded for a blessing of rain so that the crops would grow and they would not starve. But still the heavens were closed and the rains would not fall.

Misako watched every day as the painting neared completion. Soon the last stroke was finished. The Abbot came to see his newly completed wall and to see if his money had been wisely spent.

"The wall is well done. The dragons appear real but you have not painted the eyes on any of them. Why have you summoned me if the work is not complete," queried the Abbot?

"If I should paint the eyes on the dragons, they would fly off your wall and enter heaven as gods," replied Zhang Seng-yao.

Those who watched thought that the master painter had overstepped his position and had boasted that his work was equal to the gods. The Abbot was furious and stormed back to his room. As the painter packed his bags to leave, he felt a small tug at his sleeve and in turning knocked Misako to the floor.

"What is it you want, child?" questioned the painter as he stooped to lift her to her feet.

Misako put her face near his ear and whispered,

"Paint the eyes and the dragons will bring rain."

Zhang Seng-yao stood and looked deep into Misako's huge black eyes. He saw wisdom beyond her years deep within their black depths.

"It is not for me to do this thing, but for you," he whispered in reply.

He handed her the brush and she delicately painted the eyes on two of the dragons. Before she could reach the third, the sky, which had been blue all that day, clouded over in darkness. There was blinding flash of lightening and the mountainside reverberated with peal after peal of rolling thunder.

Where the wall had stood only moments before, now lay rubble and dust as two of the dragons with eyes flashing, mounted to heaven with Misako on their back.

"What has happened," asked the Abbott as he rushed into the courtyard?

Rain began to fall, great fat, wet drops. They hit the dry earth, kicking up little whiffs of dust. Then the few became many and before long the Abbott and the Painter were soaked through.

Zhang Seng-yao smiled and said, "She was aptly named."

"What are you talking about, who is aptly named and what has happened to my wall?" quarreled the Abbott looking at his ruined wall.

"The child from the village, the one who was unwanted because she was plain...it was she. She painted the eyes on the dragons so that they would bring rain."

"But where is she now," asked the Abbot.

"She is with the dragons and is now a star in the heavens. They saw her true value, that she was indeed a beautiful, clever girl."

and the woman in front--
with the daughter pinned
under the mother's hand--
and the invisible baby
that lies by her side

What if you did not know
the story--
the cold moon over the
Columbia
the cannery of family workers--
generations, differences, quarrels,
with sisters
numbing of sentiments--cold
natural for children--
sleeping in attics--barefoot
in winter--

The beauty of clay pieces on a
window sill--ancient blued
with--age kitchen table--
red stockings on the little girl--
names that sound like jewels
and eyes that say--there is a well
here--but clogged up--
it cannot speak or
flow

until it warms up--and
hands are out of brine
and children grow up--and
time comes

when canneries close, husbands
move on--time comes
when the flower that grew
inside--a zinnia probably
orange or red

comes to sit on the new
window sill--and behind come

the continuous moon shines on
collected oddities of memory
and dream
and the speaking of wishes comes
out of their eyes



Nicole

Robin DePenning



Little red Corvette
Yellow submarine
Blue suede shoes
Little green apples
Black diamond slope
White Christmas

Yellow bellied
Green with envy
Black balled
Red
White
And blue

White wedding
Red dress
Black suit
Yellow pajamas
Green blazer
Blue jeans

Yellow pages read
Greenpeace flags of white
Hearts concealed black and blue.

Blueberries
White onions
Green peas
Red potatoes
Yellow squash
Black pepper

White birch
Blue moon
Yellow sun
Black forest
Red rock
Green grass

Green heron
White dove
Red robin
Bluebird
Blackbird
Yellow finch

Last night
I picked up the phone
And dialed your number
From memory.
No answer.
Not home or screening?
Doesn't matter to me
Because I heard what I wanted:
The lightness in your instructions
To leave
My name and number.
I left nothing.

At four, she raced to the next door

Jesse Mabus

No! I don't want to go-
it's dark there where the walls are leering
candlelight splashed across the ceiling and floor
remains of a blood sacrifice?
-I don't want to be next.

Suddenly, she is gone!
Beckoning me to follow in her chiffon trail
she runs into the blackness vanishing from view
what then can I do
race into the unknown?

The darkness opens up
red garish light seeps through a crack
one lone ghoulish hand slowly snakes out.
Will it grab her, draw her in?
Candy drops into her pumpkin.

Is the Moon Tired?

Pallus Sophia Mabus

Is the moon tired?
Beneath her misty veil
She looks so fragile
So frail – like porcelain
Beginning to shatter.



Kim McCarthy

*SPIRIT of
DISCOVERY*

Editor's Notes

Two hundred years ago, in November of 1805, Captains Merriwether Lewis and William Clark arrived on the shores of our local Columbia River. For five months, the Corps of Discovery battled the elements; they bartered with the Chinook natives; they stole a canoe from the Clatsop. Working together, the tired team built a fort with logs and hand tools. Camped on the seashore now called Seaside, members of the Corps built driftwood fires and boiled the salt from seawater. They ate the flesh of wild elk, the blubber of beached whale. They shot a California condor. They traveled the trails and encountered the impasses of our local landmarks--Cape Disappointment, Dismal Nitch and Tillamook Head.

Sacajawea, an Indian woman, walked with them. Despite countless pages written about her life, we know very little about this important American woman. We're not sure, for certain, how this young mother pronounced her name. We do know, from the journals, that one mid-winter day, Sacajawea "importunately" insisted that she, too, be allowed to explore the flanks of Tillamook Head. She insisted upon seeing the great Ocean. She insisted upon seeing the great whale. We know little about her life, but reading the journals, we can safely conclude that Sacajawea knew, deep in her human soul, the hunger to discover what's unknown. We also know she walked a landscape that we can still walk this day. She felt the slap of salal and huckleberry. She saw the crashing seas and spindrift, the giant cedar and Spanish moss.

Brown and white skins exploring together, the Corps of Discovery walked the Washington and Oregon landscape. They paddled. They climbed with four limbs grabbing for footholds. And they also wrote. The pair of famous Captains scrawled countless pages while gathered round the damp and smoky fires on the shores of the Netul River. The Lewis and Clark Expedition was not only a major event in American history, but also a hallmark of American literature. The selections which follow celebrate that ongoing literary tradition: to explore, to look carefully, to reflect, and to express oneself in images and words. What does the Spirit of Discovery mean to us today? So much has changed, and yet much has stayed the same. As a human species, many, like Sacajawea, continue to long for *and* express the Spirit of Discovery. In the pages which follow, readers will witness that continuum of discovery. Art as discovery. Foreign travel as discovery. Natural history as discovery. Chasing-a-clam-in-the-sand as discovery. Making a magazine is also a process of discovery. Read on and discover a diverse commemoration of human history, a heartfelt celebration of the human creative spirit. Kudos to my fabulous staff! Kudos to all the talented contributors!

Nancy Cook
Faculty Advisor



Where do you go seeker?
Bundled in ragged cloth
Face pressed against wind
Peering through black rain
As gray waters lap-slap on shorelines
& cold clouds hide mountains

Where do you go seeker?
Eyes aglow with fires
Burning in night forests
Shadows dancing
Among ancient firs

Where do you go seeker?
With thoughts racing seaward
Hopes moving westward
Dreams captured inward

O where do you go seeker?
When there is nowhere else to go.

I've Lately Come to Oregon

Robert Kroning

I've lately come to Oregon
from the desert, and points East.
It's been a lifetime's journey:
Lots of famine, little feast.

I've run out of hills to cross, I fear,
And there've been quite a few,
Where the land got bored with flatness
and rose up to have a view.

I'm past the highest places now--
Peaks snow-topped, majestic, and free,
Where the Cascades feed the brooks and streams
that go down to sweeten the sea.

The hills are little mountains here,
And wear a perpetual green,
And there's always mist on the lee sides,
Or somewhere in between.

I landed at the edge of the sea,
Where the first explorers stood,
Where strange-named streams try to fill the deep-
As if they ever could.

I've never lived so far North before,
Nor seen more fogs and wets;
Still, I think I've found the good place-
As good as it ever gets.

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Shovels over our shoulders and buckets in our hands, we hiked through beachgrass hummocks, heading for the sea. The day was cold and overcast, with a south wind so strong it bent the grass to the ground and raised ripples on the puddles in the trail. But this was good--the weather seemed to be keeping everyone else at home, probably finishing off the brandy and pumpkin pie, putting another log on the fire, wishing maybe they hadn't eaten so much. Out there in the dunes, it was only us, bending into the wind, hurrying to get to the beach an hour before the razor-clam tide, a minus tide, the lowest tide in November. This was a family trip, as Thanksgiving celebrations should be--Jon and Frank and I, and my sister and her husband, and their daughter, Carley--six of us thumping along in tall boots through the clean, wild wind.

We followed the trail to the top of the foredune and stared down at the beach. There must have been a thousand people--pickup trucks parked every which way on the sand, dogs running around, people formed up into a crowd wavering along the edge of the sea, the whole flock of them running inland as each wave slid in, then scuttering seaward behind the receding line of foam. We stood for a moment, trying to figure out where all these people came from. How did they get their cars onto the beach, and why weren't they home watching football? Then we took great leaping steps down the dune and joined the crowd.

There was a man in an oxford-cloth shirt, looking like he had just yanked off his tie, thrown it into the backseat, pulled on camouflage waders and walked into the sea. There was a bearded man in a slicker and shorts, with his leg-hair plastered to his skin. A woman shuffled around in neoprene waders so big that the crotch fell to her knees and the feet flopped behind her like broken legs. Two little boys ran by in high boots, chased by the surge, then back they ran, kicking at the line of foam as the water sank into the sea.

Suddenly low sun broke through the clouds. Thin lines of light shot between the leaping waves, and the people burst into color--red and yellow and blue and more yellow, all reflected in the wet mirror of the beach. Sunbeams spotlighted the yellow slickers, the red raincoats, the blue parkas, the shiny black boots, and the brilliant, sharp-edged reflections.

Each time the slick of water rose and receded, people followed it seaward. They each carried a shovel turned upside down, so the handle pointed toward the sand. They walked a few steps, thumped the sand with the handles of their shovels, walked a little farther, thumped again, hoping to see a dimple form in the sand. That dimple was the place where a clam flinched at the disturbance and pulled back its siphons, leaving a hollow hole.

Merging into the line of people, we wandered up and down the beach, thumping and watching. A shout went up and we turned sideways to brace against an oversize, onrushing wave. The wave lifted a roostertail against our calves, then rushed on with a force like a river. It washed the legs out from under a middle-aged woman. She rolled in the surf, scrambling to her feet. Children raced up the beach. We stood up to our boot-tops in water that calmed, then slowly ebbed toward the sea. We walked on, thumping and watching.

And then the sun was at the horizon, huge, lemon yellow, only partially visible behind suddenly golden-rimmed clouds. Everyone looked up from their digging, and this is when the next wave caught the children and filled their boots and knocked them laughing on their yellow-slickered bottoms. Forgetting their shovels and their search, everyone turned toward the sunset and watched the foam lift off the surf--the white waves, the gold-tipped clouds, the impossible sun sinking so fast we could see it go. And then it was gone and the world turned silver, even the children, shining like fish in the mist.

Frank drove his shovel into the sand, sinking it to the shaft on the seaward side of a dent. Then he dropped to his knees, reached past his elbows into the watery sand, and brought up a razor clam. It was big, longer than his hand, and so fat it couldn't close its shell--a pound of clam, sweet and white and clean and smelling of the sea. People wandered all over the wet flats in the darkening day, leaning on their shovels, tapping the sand, abruptly dropping to their knees. Pale fog hid the base of the headlands. As the dusk got darker and colder, some people gathered up their families and left the beach, their headlights making a wide sweep across the sand. There would be clams for a late Thanksgiving dinner in their houses, butter sizzling and salty sea-smelling steam fogging the windows.

Other people lit kerosene lanterns and stayed on. Up and down the beach, we could see circles of yellow light swinging, and answering balls of light reflected on the slick of the ebbing tide. The darker the seas got, the more deeply blue the sky, and the first stars started to appear. Black-silhouetted people gathered around their lanterns, slowly moving together across the strand, watching the sand for a sign, their

faces glowing and the fronts of the rubber overalls slick and glistening in lantern light--red, yellow, blue. They stood up to their shins in the black sea, lanterns swinging over the shallows, a wash of bright color swirling around their knees. When the seas poured out again, I saw the sand slump into a little dent. I pushed in my shovel and wiggled it back and forth. Then I got down on my knees, jammed my sleeve up to my elbow, and plunged my hand into cold sand. Carefully, to keep from cutting my fingers, I groped around. Something flinched. I closed my hand around a clam and brought it up with a shout that disappeared in the thudding surf. Brown-blue opalescent clams lay in the bottom of our buckets. Two for each of us, so fat we didn't need any more.

I think I know what it means to be blessed. The empty sand, the sudden sign, and then the fat sweet clam--unseen, undeserved, enough. And I'm starting to see what it means to be grateful.

When I've questioned Western philosophy about gratitude, I got a thin, dry answer: To be grateful is to feel kindly toward a benefactor, something one ought to do, but an imperfect duty, because no one can demand it from another. Like forgiveness or love, gratitude has to come freely or it loses its worth. Fair enough, but how can anyone help but be grateful on a night like the night of the razor-clam tide? To be alive to the damp wind and the laughter of children, to feel the pressure of the sea against your boots and the weight of clams in your bucket--this is enough, a great gift. And is this night so different from any other night? I'm beginning to understand that gratitude is a way of life.

Gratitude is a kind of seeing, an awareness of the magnitude of the gift of this earth. To see the world gratefully is to be endlessly surprised by the bare fact of it, its beauty and power and everlastingness. Gratitude is attentiveness. It's easy to move through the world and never notice how a shifting wind changes the air from salt to cedar, easy to overlook the invisible moon that moves the tides. To be grateful is to stand with stinging eyes and reddening nose in the northwest wind, taking it in--really this, taking it in--the expanse of dunes and dusk and each blade of beach-grass drawing a circle on the sand. Gratitude peels the brown flakes from a clam shell and holds it into the sun--the violet glow--and wonders at the ridges on the shell, one for every year, so much like the ripples in creekbeds on the beach.

Gratitude is also a kind of terror. The gifts of this world come unbidden and undeserved. Humankind has no claim against the universe for starlight or clams. No one owes us any of this--the air to breathe, the children to fear for, the tides to mark

each day, the winter storms. Rain is not a birthright. The world is contingent, improbable, beyond our control: it could be, or not. A small change in a constant, and none of this happens—not the universe, not the clams. If it were to be taken away, there is nothing we could do to get it back, no entitlement we could claim. The gift is a mystery, beyond understanding—why there is something, rather than nothing, and why it is so beautiful?

Gratitude is a kind of rejoicing. Even though it might not have been, and may yet not be, the earth is. The sudden awareness of the gift can fill a person with joy, a well-being that arrives like high tide, lifting our spirits, expanding our sense of possibility, spreading out calm and shining at the horizons of our lives.

And is gratitude a moral obligation? I would say it is. The obligation is owed to the earth itself. To be grateful is to live a life that honors the gift. To care for it, keep it safe, protect it from damage. Not to discount or ignore it, but to use it respectfully. To celebrate it, to honor the worth of it in a thousand ways, not just in words, but in how we live our lives.



Aqua Explorers

Andy Shidner

I've always had a certain fear of bears, ever since, as a boy, I saw one dressed out, hanging in a butcher shop locker. With its hide stripped away, it looked just like a man. Why would a bear want to hide inside of a man? I wondered-- unless he was up to no good, or was charmed in some way?

I go up to these woods by my house, summer days now. I go to walk and maybe jog a little. Hardly anyone knows about the place, and I hope it stays that way. I go to be alone, mostly.

One day, not long ago, as I was standing beside the woods, I got this queer buzzing sensation in my belly, and looking up, I saw a black shadow lumbering off through the trees; it goes a ways, and then hesitates, as if glancing back at me-- *bear*, I whisper to myself, starting to shiver, *stay away! For this are my woods, too.*

But I'm bluffing; for I know these woods belongs to the biting flies and the owls and crows, snakes, and possums-- why, even to the red-tailed hawk that soars far above us. And that's not all. On a recent afternoon when I was up there again, gazing off into trees, I was suddenly startled to see, not fifteen feet away, starting at me, a magnificent buck deer, horns and all-- just standing there, unafraid, as if to say, *This is my woods, too. I'll be here when you are gone.* And then he turned and walked blithely away.

Have you ever seen a deer walk away through woods? He dips his head, in a nod, and then he moves, pricking his hooves over the sod, passing between trees, and is gone. Always was that way.

You can't hide in a wood, anymore than you can in an animal skin; birds try it, crouched up high on some limb; so do crickets, deep down in mossy earth; even trees. You see them clumped together, like women caught naked in the rain. But you still can't hide. And you can't be alone, either, because, sooner or later, the bears will find you out, and the deer.

So what *can* you do, anyway?

Not much, I guess. I'll just go up there, like tomorrow, and maybe, who knows? Maybe this time they'll all be there, as if waiting for me, all standing at the edge of the woods-- the bears, the rabbits, and coyotes, the deer, and all the rest.

And one of them might even step forward, look me in the eye and ask, "Where have you been lately? Whatever took you so long?"

I wake happy here.
The light outside my window,
waves' grandmotherly hum, the ample
luxury of this same-soft bed. I smooth
the quilt as I rise.

Each window-blind a magician's scarf
stripped away. Light crests the hills, hint
of sun on the sea, bleached breakers
an elysian white. Daughter asleep,
house steeped in milky quietness--
holy *casa del mar*,
as my monk friend says

*Birds of morning fly
into my tree, turn breasts
to wakening day.*
Once

from my window I saw the word
WELCOME spelled out in foam
on the beach. Swift sagging message
returned to sea. Back to mystery,
second-guessing. Back to who-
knows-where. It didn't matter.

All of life a flash of messages:
who we are, where our hearts belong,
where the deep welcome of time
will not be lost. Birds fly
into our trees, then ascend, mere
quivers of light, and come back again.

Here you wander, walking in life's field.
Not knowing where you're going or where you may go.
Life stretches all about you, yet you see it all without you.
It seems as though it wishes not to want you, or wants you not to know.
You're walking in a field but you're walking in the fog.
You cannot see the way, the way you see.
You walk with little wonder, and are lost on still to wander-
Walking in Life's Field.



Had Clark stood
where his bronze likeness now stands,
surveying a bronze sturgeon
lying lifeless among the dune grass,
he would have been treading water,
not grounded on a hillock of sand.

Had the sun been shining
at Station Camp and Dismal Niche,
and the Bear River elk herd
not-so-elusive,
Fort Clatsop might have been
Fort Chinook.

On the other hand,

Had Meriwether and William
dined nightly on nothing but oysters
they might have been tempted,
depending on their palates,
to scurry south
all that much quicker.

Had the river's mouth
been slightly more narrow
the booming towns of
Lewiston and Clarkston
might be straddling the Columbia,
not the Snake.

On the other hand,

They came and laid claim
to territory which had nothing to do
with the Louisiana Purchase.
But had they not come,
we here, right now,
might be speaking English.

Be nice to the natives and give
 them some things.

Take lots of tobacco, Peace
 Medals and rings.

They know all that country
 and you need good leads

As well as fine horses--
 take blankets and beads

As for your diaries,
 attend to the telling;

Do not bother with trifles
 like syntax and spelling.

Make maps of the landscape,
 show its shape; note the soil.

Record all the weather--
 when you rest, how you toil.

Keep track of the peoples;
 describe whom you meet,

Where they live, how they couple,
 how they dress, play and eat.

Could you call the squaws handsome?
 are they red, brown or black?

I don't mind if they mate--
 just bring your men back.

So yeah, I saw these guys across the river. They were wearing soggy leather. I'm thinking okay, sure, that's about as dumb as you can get, but I'll go along with it. And I saw their canoes, if that's what they were, more like a large log with a piece out of it. I could tear a branch off a tree and it'd probably work better. I go to trade with them, and they show me a handful of beads and hawk bells. You can't help but feel sorry for them. I offer them some fish, and they turn it down. They want elk instead. They look hungry. Okay, don't have fish, but at least you can come be stupid on the other side of the river. They point at my hat. They're like cavemen. "Thingy on head keep him dry, me want." This is what they were thinking. Then they point at my canoe, looking excited. Maybe they know they're stupid and wish they were smart like us. Who are these guys? Coming over here on logs in rotten hide. Maybe they like to live the extreme lifestyle, ya know, for the rush. That's it. Ha, extreme cavemen.

You could be sirens, who could know for sure
Entering the sensuous mouth, allured
By hymns of northwest passage, destinies manifest deep
In frontier hearts, that old explorer drumbeat
Clacked against the jetty rock by bones, indigenous, buried, bleached.
Your songs of massacres wake good men from sleep.

You could be the mythical castrating teeth
Jutting out from the gum of water, salt streaked
And wind-carved, your grin is feared by all
Who cross the bar, their bodies lashed to hulls
Their hatches, decks, and gunwales battered, sails snug
As doubt creeps through clattering jaws in fog.

What would Clark have thought, had the Corps
Of Discovery ventured by sloop? Your dark maw
Scoped up close, reveals gangly shrubs stuck out from the cracks,
Curves slumped, like no goddess would, and a raft
Of wood at the surface; discarded flotsam of shipwrecks.
"Not worth the risk," Clark shakes his head, and turns back.

Meanwhile, in the gallery, a kerosene lamp smokes the window glass
And the captain's counterpart slurs a whisper, "Stay underway, poor sap."
He drinks his whiskey, cleans the chamber of his pistol.
Thinking of dead Indians while he sharpens his razor,
He knows, before the shot, no one will hear the last words from Meriwether Lewis:
"Stay underway, these are the three graces of forgiveness, forgiveness, and forgiveness."

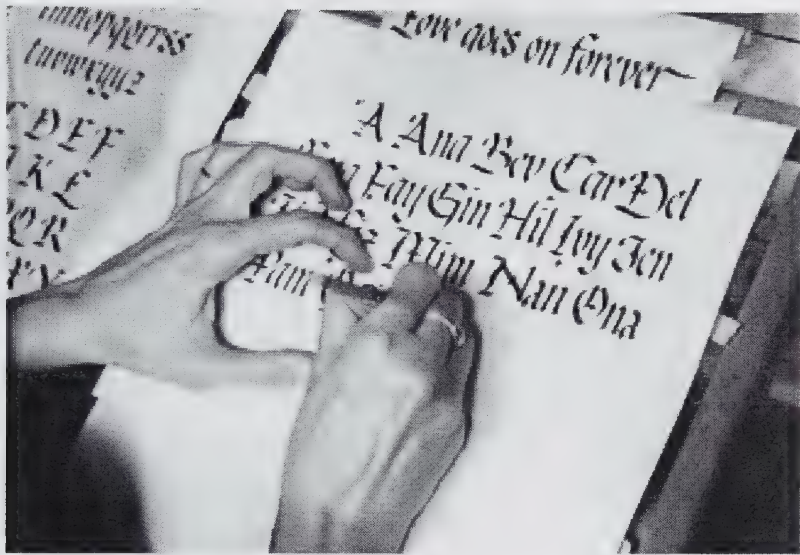
Discovering Art



Great Heads Think Alike

Roy Westeen

A Photo Essay by CCC Photography Students



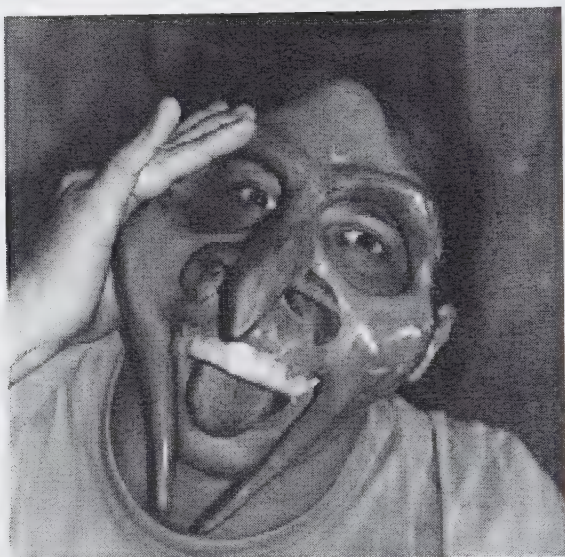
Calligraphy

Beth Kandoll



Sketching

Rick Houston



Pottery mask

Cory Carlton



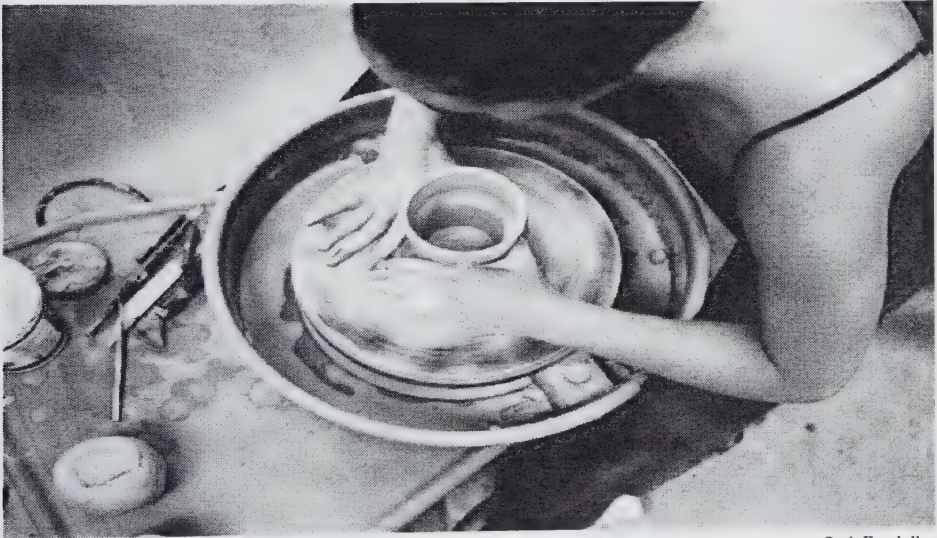
Agony

Roy Westeen



Intent Students

Beth Kandoll



Throwing

Beth Kandoll



Pottery Self Portrait

Elizabeth DeLong



Lovin' Soupful Benefit

Rick Houston



Retired Apron

Rick Houston



Walking

Julianna Weir

I. Into Varzob

Beneath the snowy peaks of Varzob
dachas of stone and glass follow
the browning sycamores upstream
until the canyon narrows into solitude.
Across the near ridge, rock softens
to a cushion of ground grass and pellets.
Five shaggy goats--gray, black, brown,
rust, and off-off-white--pick their way
over turf they've trodden, grazed, and shat
into recycled fiber forever. They know
their way to where the valley opens out
to a tiny farm with russet fruit trees
and the goatherd's mud hut. This too
has been the same
since prophets walked the land.

A great boulder, split down the middle, crops
the white mountains, the blue sky,
like a strip torn from a photograph. I enter
the cleft, and step into the heart of Varzob.
Sun silvers the rim above with backlit lichen,
moss, webs, and stalks of grass. Below
the slit lies the midden of a dormouse,
shells of walnut and pistachio. I hear
the stream below, the crows above,
rock buntings and hawfinches chipping
in yellow hawthorns--then nothing.

The goats have climbed a distant ridge.
I step out, and a brimstone butterfly zips
up the crack in the middle of Asia.

II. South of Dushanbe

Beside the ruined fort at Hisor
people picnic, play soccer, visit
dark rooms of the Medreseh-turned-museum
to see plows and pots and churns and swords.
Our guide tells of the old spring that watered
the mosque and fort in ancient times. "The water,"
he says, "is still pure."

An old man in a Tajik cap and green velvet coat
sits atop a dusty knoll. He wants to tell
stories in exchange for an ear, a simoni or two,
but I've had enough history and excuse myself
to wander. At the spring,
brown sheep with long Nubian noses
and broad butts and pygmy goats
with curly horns and turned-up tails all bleat
and bah and browse the lush watercress
like noisy salad. A fossorial rodent shoves
soil out a hole in the bank, shows tiny feet
and pink snout for a second, then disappears
beneath the ancient earth.

Children laugh and scamper to the outlet,
take turns filling plastic water bottles
downstream
from all the animals they'd chased
around the green remnants of an age.
Then they run back up the rutted hill
clutching their flagons of life, as
small fishes and bubbles worry
the cool water of the spring and the sheep
and the goats chomp and cough their way
across the tired old oasis.
Long spider-strands balloon
across the arid air. Beneath that silken sky,
flutes and drums and car horns echo
frantic wedding parties out beyond
the fortress gate. The strands congeal

into silver skeins, as if veils and scarves
escaped all the brides posing for pictures,
and took off flying down the Silk Road,
south of Dushanbe.



Sea Lions

Robert Brown

The retreating ice age glacier
scrapes away petrified tree stumps,
shreds basalt boulders, litters
crap rock for miles, relentlessly.

But it's hard for us to see the jagged cliff
grandeur and distant screed valleys
while focused on rocks and roots
and the boots ahead - step by step.

What I'd like to capture is that glacier's
mouth- leering, toothless, chasm spewing
chocolate milk laced with stony marshmallows,
but instead I gasp when a tiny green frog
rides a step on my shoestrings.

Ode to my Toe

Nancy Hoffman

Fingers get all the glory in this life--
pointers, filers, typers, trigger pullers,
prestidigitatation practitioners.
Most especially opposable thumbs
Human beings make.

But, oh, my lowly, calloused, blistered toe
woolen sock swaddled and buried from sight
selfless metatarsophalangeal
Once again launch this body down the trail
and fingers' fame forsake.

Lewis and Clark are sitting around a table envisioning the future of their new found land.

Clark: (glancing across the horizon)

This sure is some beautiful country. I hope Jefferson doesn't have any major plans to develop and build it up like the East Coast.

Lewis:

Are you kidding? He'd be crazy not to cash in on what's here.

Clark:

Cash in? What do you mean?

Lewis:

Look at these trees. They are hundreds of years old and straight as arrows. We can use them to build railroads that can haul thousands of people out here and have enough left over to build each person a house to live in.

Clark:

OK, how do you plan to feed all those people?

Lewis:

Fish, there are billions of fish in the river. We can feed people for a hundred years with the fish in the river.

Clark:

After you cut down all the trees and eat all the fish, what then? Do you drape the empty nets over the stumps, call it good and move somewhere else?

Lewis:

No you pull the stumps and make the place look like Ireland. It will be green and pastoral. Cows like green grass.

Clark:

And when the beef industry goes flat?

Lewis:

You create golf courses, garden shops and RV Parks.

Clark:

Will golf courses, garden shops and RV parks pay living wages to their employees?

Lewis:

Of course not. The economy will promote some criminal activity as a result, but the police will be paid well to keep order. Teachers and social workers will come along and then there will be several other well paid people around who will get paid to make the have-nots feel better about their lot in life. It's a whole cultural/psychological juggernaut. The future economy will depend on it keeping in perfect balance.

Clark:

So your have-nots are doomed, and you don't think that they will ever catch on that the success of the educated class depends on their doom?

Lewis:

That's the beauty of it. When things look hopeless we can bring in some carpet bagger industry with an unsafe product that isn't wanted anywhere else. We'll get the word out about how bad it will be for the community and the have-nots will vote it down and feel good that they value safety over a living wage. They aren't going to get hurt watering the lawn at the golf course. So what if they don't make any money, at least they get to go home to their family every night. It's a "Family Values" thing... (pauses momentarily in thought) Wow! "Family Values." That's golden... that phrase is money in the bank... That's political capital, what a great spin.

Clark:

You are so greedy, man! Why can't you give anything to the poor to elevate them from their condition?

Lewis:

I will give the best thing they could ever ask for.

Clark:

OK, I'll bite. What could that possible be?

Lewis:

Churches! We will build them churches so they will understand that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man into the kingdom of Heaven.

Clark:

You are so full of crap. You know damn well that if the poor *didn't* believe in God they would murder all the rich people.

Lewis:

(Smirking) Ain't that the truth, Brother! Ain't that the truth... I'm counting on it. So as I was saying, we will build churches in every neighborhood.

Clark:

And when churches aren't enough to stave their misery?

Lewis:

Then we go to war.

Clark:

And when the war is over?

Lewis:

Then we build them a Wal*Mart. That will perpetuate the whole thing for fifty years or longer.

Clark:

You have all the answers don't you?

Lewis:

Yep, that's why we are not listed alphabetically. The brains get top billing. It's "Lewis and Clark." Remember that. (Lewis stands to head off to bed)
I'm going to hit the sack and dream about the future. You best get ready to fill your pockets. Good night, William (Lewis exits the stage muttering) Stinking Liberal.

Clark:

Good night, Meriwether...

(Wonders aloud after Lewis is off the stage)

Somehow, I get the feeling I should kill him in his sleep...

Nah, he's actually a good guy. He'll forget all about it on the trip home to civilization.



David Herrold

photo by Jane Herrold

David Herrold was my Dad. He bought my first car, my first horse, and a substantial education. I stood in awe of him as I was growing up. A lifelong resident of the fishing berg, Ilwaco, Washington, he could run a chain saw like an electric knife, land and gut a giant prehistoric sturgeon, dig his limit of precious razor clams in minutes, and smoke salmon like no one else.

He was handsome and witty with a twinkle in his blue eyes. Even at 90 years of age, he was still a lady charmer. My Dad was the epitome of the strong, silent type with a boatload of integrity. Like many of his generation he was given a nickname: "Easy."

David Herrold taught his only daughter how to work hard and showed enough trust to allow her to play equally as hard. "Have fun, Tillicum," he would insist.

Last year I found myself feeding him. He died at the ripe age of ninety of complications from old age. As he put it, "I'm all washed up, Jane."

"So am I, Dad. So am I," I would answer.

"You go have some fun, Tillicum," he would always say, right on cue.

Dad had his own way of expressing himself in this "world according to David Herrold." "Dad-ism," were always quotable and consistent. About big boobs: "If she fell over she wouldn't skin her nose." About beer guts: "Look at the bait tank on that guy." About the man who sells roadside yard art in Chinook; "There's the windmill guy—always there. He must have a mean wife." About someone who talks too much; "Her mouth goes like a goose's ass." About crowds and traffic; "I'm like a cat in a bag."

I became the family chauffeur, and every time we'd get ready to take off, he'd quote Jackie Gleason by saying, "And awaaaay we go!"

Flatulence was a favored topic with my Father. When things were good, he was "fartin' in silk." His recliner was his "fart sack." About diarrhea; "I can't fart with confidence."

Sage advise regarding home repair projects; "Just keep peckin' away at it, Jane. Just keep peckin' away. Pretty soon it will be all done and you won't have anything to bitch about." When the river was calm, it was "flatter than a snake's ass." Tourists were "pukers." Family vacations were "goddamn safaris." Icy highways were "slicker than snot on a doorknob." Salmon with plum sauce was a "terrible thing to do to a fish."

He called my horse "that bovine of yours." Cowboy the Chihuahua was my "sidekick." One of my boyfriends was "that poor bastard." Vegetarian restaurants were "seed joints." Patsy Cline was the only woman in history that could sing. About loud rock music he'd say, "That's a pretty tune...hehehe." Paying rent was "like pouring sand into a rat hole." And I was always "busier than a three-peckered Billy goat."

The smell of gas always makes me nostalgic. Although Dad was fond of making fart jokes, I mean the "GASOLINE" type, in this case. Dad owned the hometown fillin' station in downtown Ilwaco. As a little girl he would let me run the hydraulic lift, sit in the cop cars being serviced, and experience the thrill of washing windshields. "You Betcha!" he would retort when "the Pukers" thanked him.

Old "Easy" was born in 1912 in Ilwaco, graduated from Ilwaco schools, lived in Ilwaco his entire life except for his WWII tour of duty in the South Pacific, and now is buried next to my mother in Ilwaco. (She died in 1978.) He was the youngest of six children of pioneer residents Roy and Elfreda (Colbert) Herrold. His father and grandfather operated fish traps on the west side of Sand Island in the Columbia River in an area known as "Oklahoma." His mother, a descendent of the Chinook Nation, was born in a small village on the shores of the Columbia: Chinookville, a settlement which has long since disappeared.

Upon his return to Ilwaco after World War II, he worked with his brother Harlan oystering at Cougar Bend on Willapa Bay. He met Avis Mulhall of Ashland, Massachusetts, while she was visiting a childhood friend. When she returned home, David Herrold traveled cross-country to pursue her. They were married in July of 1948 in Massachusetts, but naturally, they returned to good old Ilwaco.

That's where I came in.

An orphan now, like so many baby-boomers, I miss having a Dad who was a character and a folk humorist. I am honored to have been his buddy and his daughter. The first time I picked up the phone to call him after he went to the "Happy Hunting Ground," was to report that I finally got new brakes on my car. He could stop asking me every time he saw me, "For Christ's sake, Jane, when are you going to get that fixed? Nobody's going to do it for you!"

And awaaaaay we go!

We are the Chinook Nation.

Since time began we have lived on the banks of the Columbia
River, whose currents are woven with legends of Thunderbirds and sky.
For eons, “middle village” has stood on this very earth
where trading is old-hand and fresh faces are no new discovery.
Two-hundred years later, a white woman considers the “white” lie of this land.

A corps’ in search of great waters, arrived on Chinook land
and shining in their hands were gifts—peace medallions of an invading nation.
A troupe from the government, marching in finery, proud of their discovery.
We are told Jefferson is “the great white father” and ruler of the Columbia!
Warriors will bow down and back away from stories of earth.
Forget the centuries we have revered this ancient sky.

A fifteen starred flag waves against the now dark and clouded sky
representing white states, and all tribes of Indian land!
A canoe named Bear Heart brought our people to the edge of earth
where on rocky shores, we beat our drums a sovereign nation.
Trade beads won’t reflect the light of the Columbia,
yet our women dig for roots to aid your discovery.

You who call us greedy and aim to make us fools! Discover
spirits of our Elders and try to redeem the sky!
A court house stands in Missouri, but your phobia
of our lawlessness is foreign in this holy land
of rain, and wind and birds with no regard to station.
Our ancestors sent us to dwell in this earthly

realm. Follow our way of life and you won’t be kept earth-
bound. Listen to your soul white-man; discover
your spirit name and love this wild nation.
White faces, and Indian faces, under one sky.
Our way is free, and we live equally with sea and land-
a giving that flows to and from the Columbia.

A circle of life complete on the banks of Columbia
River where our words breath. Alder-smokes, earthy-
notes fill the salty air and red and black canoes land
on sandbars in the deep. Casting out nets we uncover
fishes. Kingdom of the salmon people, born of the sky!
We who have hosted explorers, Chinook's thunderbird nation.

It seems no one on earth has made the discovery
that this land was ours, where the Pacific meets the sky.
Five bands of the Chinook Nation waiting return to the Columbia.



Walking Through The Fog

Robin De Penning

I. BRATISLAVA

Bratislava, 8 a.m. and a national holiday in October. We run into another Aussie on Kapitulska Ulica-- yes, they're from Perth, yes, they're here on holiday, no, they don't recognize the name of your town. No, they have not seen the Blue Church. The greenbacked policemen patrolling an empty Námestie L'udovita t úra don't recognize it either. Slovakian? No. German? Blaue Kirche ring a bell? I photograph the quadratic equation scrawled on a streetpost before the Bratislava Gymnasium. It's 11 a.m. and the city's deserted. We find a café to practice our German. My German is in shambles. The city is in shambles. We eat cold apples while looking at the Danube.

It's 4 p.m., sky smoky, brick buildings pockmarked with bullet holes, on the train home a girl opposite us brings out a US passport. She's reading East of Eden. Uniformed officials speak in sharp German to explain that her three day ticket has expired. She hands out euros, Swiss francs, US dollars, Slovak koruns. I don't understand, I'm sorry, I'm just a tourist. We're all a long ways from home. This Eden is maybe too East, maybe Steinbeck should have stuck with California, maybe he shouldn't bother with these Slavic tongues and remember his characters from warmer places.

II. PRAGUE

Please don't remember taking shots at that Czech specialty that looks like Windex and tastes like snaps enraged with mint and licorice. Maybe you can recall still finding our way home under that crackling sky and tripping on those cobblestones along Wenceslas Square at a dusty 1 a.m., but I'd rather not. Please.

Please remember statues dripping on the Charles Bridge, the street violinist's strings snapping in the cold front down from St. Petersburg. (Please remember the cracked hands of your grandfather who'd been to colder places yet, dropping bombs over Vienna at fifteen thousand feet.) You say that Kafka's interred somewhere here, still stuck in the claws of his old crone. Can't be half so bad. I like the feel of this Pinkas Cemetery with headstones staggered like old teeth in the gums of ground that hasn't yet chewed them out. I like this list of names on the Synagogue walls-- seventy thousand holocaust victims and only four with mine. No, I can't bring you back to life. (A man in a skullcap and black kisses fingertips, wall.)

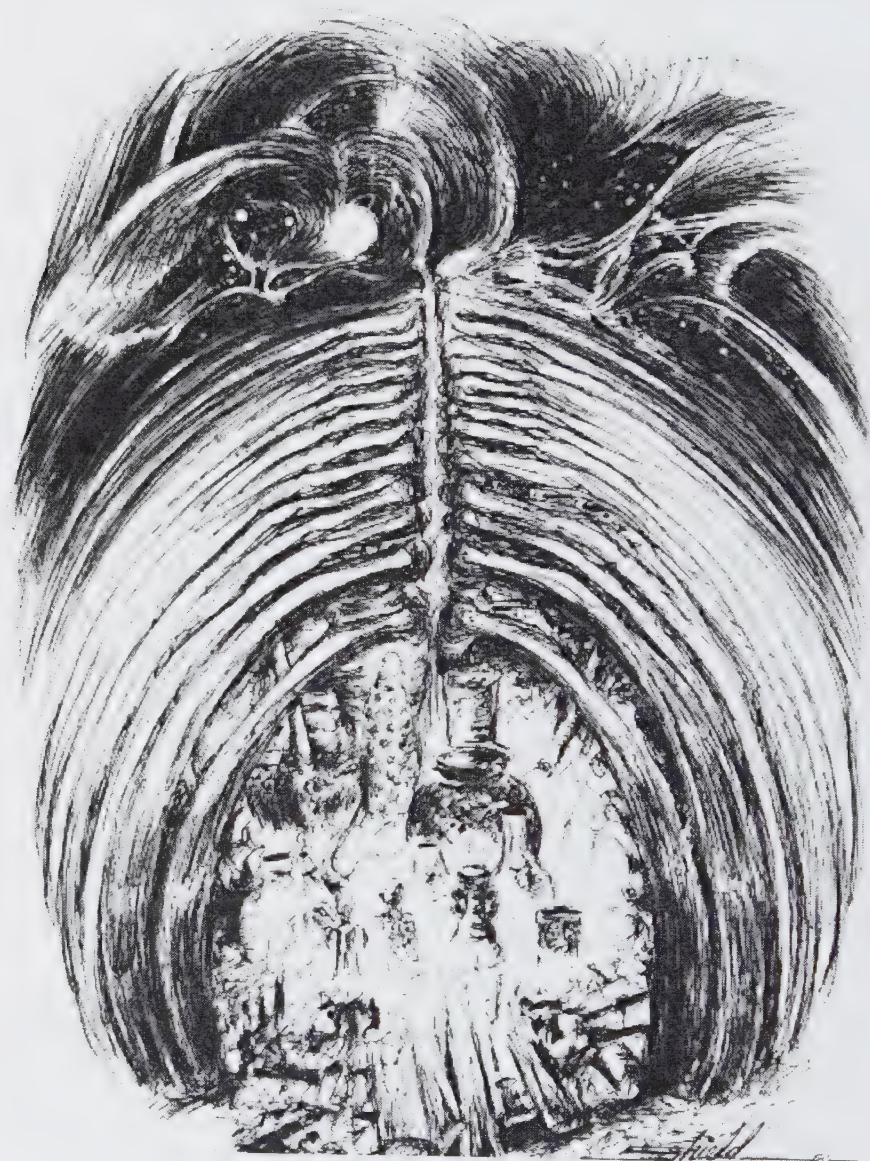
Reclining on a bed at three thirty a.m. I feel great, so great I could kiss these cobblestones, kick the white moon out of the Moldau I say as we lay terrified, stupefied, eating three boxes of Pims between us.

III. VIENNA

I'm learning essentially that this isn't the city of the Van Traps. We eat McDonald's Sachertorte between thumb and finger. Look, you say, here's where Hitler spoke, here's where Grillparzer lived, here's where Maria Theresa kept her summer place. Here's where Mozart married Figaro and Susanna. (Here on the Opernring is where bombs smashed the Staatsoper to stone shreds.)

I try developing a taste for Austrian literature I develop instead a taste for Palatschinken and Kaiserschmarrn. Those emperors knew their stuff, I say, and we're walking through Schönbrunn with creaking floors and snow sadly drizzling across lawns of 1850 while the Kaiser plays (against time) a waiting game hung up, preserved and dried in a portrait. We rust in raincoats and boots, Silvester ushered in with the Blue Danube waltz and champagne flutes from street vendors I'm thinking: Where I'm from, the river's twice as wide.

Yesterday have I for three hours in the Stephansdom sat.
(I would be outside, but this isn't January in California, and I'm not going home.)







On August 14th 1805, Lewis angrily reported in his journal that Charboneau struck his Indian woman for which Captain Clark gave him a severe reprimand.

A couple find themselves lost while driving on Business Route 101 to the Natel Grange. The woman is driving and the man searches for the directions.

Man:

I remember the directions said to turn onto this road, but now I can't find the piece of paper I had the direction written on.

Woman:

Let's ask that man at the bottom of the hill. He looks like a local.

Man:

What makes you think he's a local?

Woman:

The flannel shirt and the coon skin hat are a give-away.

They pull over. The man rolls down his window.

Man:

Hi! Can you give us directions to the Natel Grange?

Clark:

Sure can stranger! I guess you're both heading to the Lewis and Clark Ho-Down... it ought to be a blast. Well the fastest way to get there is to turn around and take a left on to Fort Clatsop Road and go past Fort Clatsop, that's where Lewis and Clark spent the winter. Anyway, that's the tricky route because once you go past the Lewis and Clark Main Line you have to find the bridge. If you miss the turn off at the little Lewis and Clark bridge over the Lewis and Clark River, you'll end up taking Lewis and Clark Road all the way to Seaside. So I'll suggest you go straight down this road and cross the Lewis and Clark Draw Bridge over the Lewis and Clark River. You'll drive by the Lewis and Clark fire station #1 on the left and then you'll pass the Lewis and Clark Water Department. Keep going straight until you come to a strange intersection. There's a gas station on the corner. It might be a Mobil station, it might be a BP station or it might be a Union 76 station. It might even be some other station 15 minutes from now. It changes every so often, but don't let that worry you. If you get lost just ask for the gas station in Lewis and Clark and you'll get there.

Hey, don't I recognize you from Lewis and Clark College?

Man:

No, I've never been there.

Clark:

Well then, right after the Lewis and Clark station you'll make a right on to Lewis and Clark Road. That's at the Lewis and Clark Nursery which is in front of the Lewis and Clark Golf Course and the soon-to-be Lewis and Clark RV Park. You'll drive by the Lewis and Clark School. At this point you will be in the area that is known as Lewis and Clark.

Keep driving and you'll pass the Lewis and Clark Bible Church and another couple miles down the road you'll see the Lewis and Clarke Cemetery. Oddly they spell Clarke with an "E" "C-L-A-R-K-E". I never have figured that one out.

Anyway, keep driving down Lewis and Clark Road and it will turn into Logan Road. Don't make the mistake of going over the little Lewis and Clark bridge that goes over the Lewis and Clark River that is up-stream from here because that will put you on to the Lewis and Clark Road that will take you to Seaside.

Anyway, Lewis and Clark turns into Logan Road and the Grange will be a couple hundred feet on the left. If you drive by the other Lewis and Clark Fire Station #2 you went about a half mile too far.

Man:

So what you are saying is that we go over the Lewis and Clark Draw Bridge over the Lewis and Clark River past the Lewis and Clark Fire Station, pass the Lewis and Clark Water Department, pass the Lewis and Clark Gas Station then go onto Lewis and Clark Road, by the Lewis and Clark Nursery that is in front of the Lewis and Clark Golf Course and the soon-to-be Lewis and Clark RV Park, into Lewis and Clark, pass the Lewis and Clark School and then the Lewis and Clark Bible Church and then the Lewis and Clarke Cemetery "Clarke spelled with an 'E'." Then get off Lewis and Clark Road and go onto Logan Rd...Right

Clark:

It sounds to me like you have it. When you get there tell them that Clark Lewis sent you. See ya!

The woman and man drive away.

Man:

I think they are way too into Lewis and Clark out here.

Woman:

Yeah, and you thought Idaho was a scary place.

Who knew when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark journeyed to our remote location that it would change things forever and continue to do so to this day? The captains were sent here to explore the region and record their findings. In doing this, they discovered a vast amount of land and people and described beautiful pristine places. That was 200 years ago. With a bicentennial coming soon to celebrate this glorious event, some people feel that Lewis and Clark were gods and we should change our lives to celebrate or commemorate their magnificent feat.

I recently attended a public meeting concerning the proposed Lewis and Clark bicentennial trail. My friend said that she didn't want it down her road and brought up her concern about the potential increase in traffic and garbage on country road. In response to that, an over zealous local historian stood up, thumped on his worn Lewis and Clark book and proclaimed, " Well, I'm sorry you bought property where Lewis and Clark walked!" Her property had been in the family for 100 years, but she was too upset to say anything. The land meant something to her. It was her blood and guts, her passion, her sanctuary, and the home for her children. At that point, I realized some people might go a little overboard in their efforts to worship these explorers.

A proposal to deepen the Columbia River by blasting is in the planning stages. We should incorporate a connecting "L" and "C" into the channel. Then the tourists flying in the helicopters above can get an aerial view and really know that this is where Lewis and Clark ended their journey. We could kick out all the year round playing moorage customers from the local marinas and cater only to tourist loaded tour boats, keelboats, and pirogues that are following the trail of Lewis and Clark.

To promote the economy, some of the seafood processing plants could train their employees to hack out cottonwood canoes, assembly line style. They would place the logs on the continually moving bottom fish belts and pay the idle fish filterers to chip away. A neon light manufacturing company could occupy one of the empty buildings in downtown Astoria. It could produce thousands of "LEWIS AND CLARK SLEPT HERE" signs to place at every motel. That is, if the motels aren't razed to the ground and traditional longhouses erected in their place.

Maybe Ma Boyle from Columbia Sportswear Company would want to move into another abandoned downtown building. She could create jobs by manufactur-

ing buckskin outerwear, for people who want the real Lewis and Clark experience. These fringed fashions would have to be left out in the elements over the winter to achieve the authentic soggy, rotten texture. Our current dairy and beef farmers could raise deer instead of cows to supply the demand for deerskins.

Let's not forget about our condor connoisseurs. The unemployment office could send clients to the empty Safeway parking lot and set up a market place. They could disguise the tern birds as condors and sell them to the public. This would kill two birds with one stone by controlling the tern population. It would also have a trickle down effect in the job market. People could build birdcages and the Department of Fisheries could hire more people to collect and analyze the bird droppings.

It's been suggested that there be an across the river boating event. We lose people every year to boating accidents because either the boaters are inexperienced or they think that the river is like a lake. Should we really have an event scheduled in November, when the weather isn't very conducive to boating? It would be wiser to build a ferry system that would run parallel with the Megler Bridge like in the good ol' days. This would ease the congestion on the bridge and Washington State would save money by not needing to put a stop light on the north side. Forget our rich fishing heritage. Lewis and Clark did not know how to fish. All those hometown sport teams will have to change their names from fishermen and loggers to explorers. All the kids in schools should change their names to Lewis and Clark. This would help the state streamline their idea that all students are the same. The girls, of course, would have to change their name to Sacajawea, and they would have nicknames of Sac or Jaw because nobody knows the correct spelling or pronunciation of Sacajawea.

The Maritime Museum will have to raise another six million dollars to change their facade in honor of the expedition. The wooden statue of Chief Comcomley will have to be altered to represent both Lewis and Clark. The states of Washington and Oregon will change their names to Lewis and Clark and probably fight over which one will be which one. Where does it stop? When will it end? How far will we go?

The result of Lewis and Clark's adventure opened this region to new settlements while displacing the original inhabitants and destroying what was sacred to them. Do we want to repeat this cycle? Should we destroy the unique beauty that we already possess, by commercializing a historic event to the point of concrete and statues? Is it wise to build new monuments when we can't take care of the ones we already have?

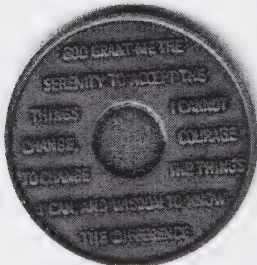
Washington State has earned 2.5 million dollars to move a section of road on highway 101 and yet nobody will repair the hole in the road on the north end of the Megler Bridge. Our few roads are not designed to support large crowds but our civic leaders continue to build momentum aimed at an extravaganza bash in 2005. Can we supply adequate police and fire protection when there isn't any extra funding available? It's a struggle coping today with the budget cuts and a lack of local volunteers.

They plan to study the feasibility of including Station Camp in a National Park, even though this is private land that has been owned by the same family for 120 years. It's the same family who has already donated one acre of land for the current site. In Washington State, community leaders wanted a trail built across several privately owned properties, "Come hell or high water." Should this be more important than property owners' rights?

Lewis and Clark enthusiasts are perpetuating the idea that the bicentennial will be so great for this region. Maybe those are the people who should give up their land, pick up garbage, volunteer to be a fireman, or train to become a police officer. Lewis and Clark had respect for this land and people. Without the help of the Native Americans, they would not have survived, and yet the Chinook tribe can't even get recognized. Change is inevitable, but are we going in the right direction and will it be good for everyone?

We have all come to the Turning Point
In our lives when we must make a decision.
Do we live or do we die? Dying is the easy
way to solve our problems. For those
of us who choose to live,
the battle has just begun.
Roadblocks, detours, and pot holes
make this road hard to travel,
but if we take our time to climb over the roadblocks,
move through the detours,
and maneuver around the pot holes
we will find that life's road does get better
as long as we keep on traveling it.

Turning Point is one of the Drug & Alcohol treatment programs at Coffee Creek Correctional facility in Wilsonville, OR.



Regret

Greg Hamann

Unintended arrival
Over roads chosen
For reasons we prefer
Not to recall



Grassy Trail

Roy Westeen

Along the river
I laid down my path
Among sand and stones
And Railroad tracks

Rushing I'd go
But I never came back
As traces of soul
I left for reflection

Before the asphalt path
No stone was unturned
My secrets paled and disappeared.
Prayers, magic, miracles
Her shores became my wishing well

Sometimes feet would turn to stone
As a golden glow fell from the sky
Laid against an amber milieu
Sunset glistening on sleepy tides



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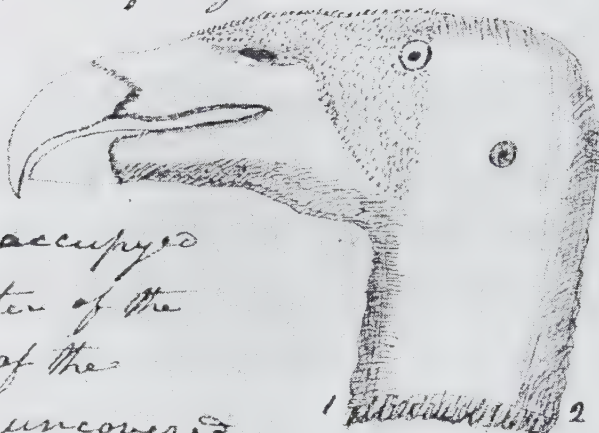
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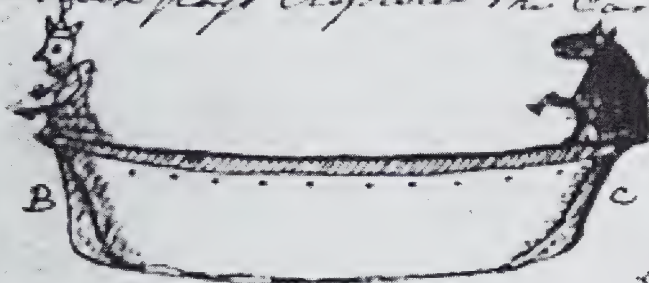


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"Vulture of the Columbia"
drawn by Clark, February 16, 1806



light which the string has to go
 which has crossed the canoe



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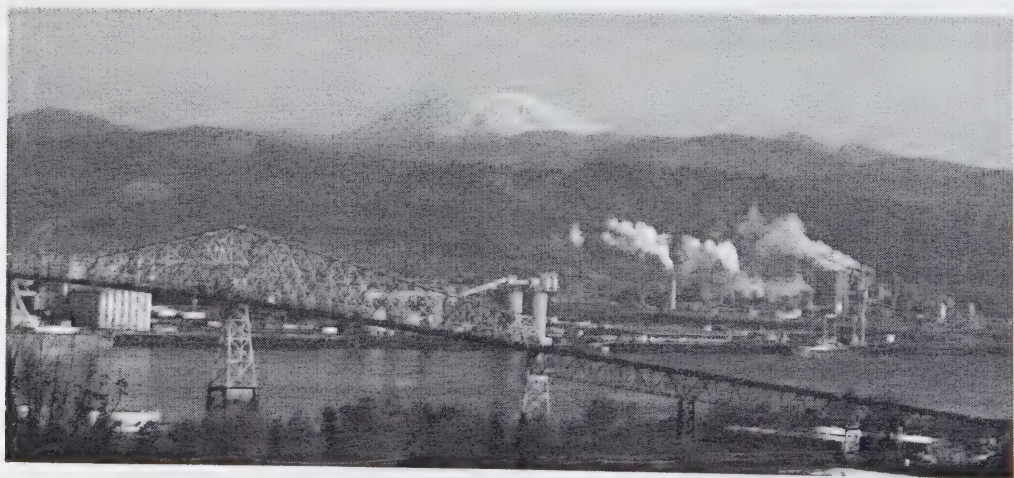
canoe with carved images
 February 1, 1806





1806-2006

Thanks to Gary Moulten
and University of Nebraska Press
for permission to use original
Corps of Discovery journal images



Where yesterday lay driven snows,
Marked only by the hand of nature--
Trace of birds' feet, prints of paws,
Tiny scars of woodland creatures--
Deeper signs now: cross-hatched circles,
In a straight line, all spaced equal.
Spoor of human, wearing snowshoes!

High stepping, short striding,
Seeking out a place of hiding
For a clanging, rattling, evil,
Blue-black, shining, heartless devil.
Beware when it falls silent, biding.

I. Discovering

Brando, in black and grey and white
up on the silver screen, he was young and brooding
and yelling our secret name – like nothing shown
before in film – he caught our breath –
his sleeveless undershirt a provocative foil
for the muscles of an exquisite brute.
Wasn't a woman watching in the dark
whose fingers didn't want those arms.

Men stripped to their tanks and working up a sweat
– and women always look – browning hot in summer,
wet on all that skin that shows, basketball, tennis,
chopping autumn wood, hefting shingles and boards,
doing things with their bodies men do to feel whole.

Outlined in winter – you can trace it if he'll let you –
through dress shirts or denim blues, that cosy little layer
his mom taught him to wear – and we tell our sons –
keeps his torso good and warm, nicely protected.

You pull off your shirt when we're alone
to reveal, across the vital expanse of your chest,
my favorite men's garment covering you
in ribbed white cotton I take in my hands
to touch the complex passions of a woman
who notices a man in a white undershirt.

I

It is harder for most people
To believe there is infinity
Within the atom
Than to believe there is infinity outward in space.
It is likewise harder
To visualize eternity preceding us
Than it is to visualize eternity succeeding us.
We have gradually given up
Most of our ends,
But not our beginnings.
We feel that in our beginnings
We have reference points of some sort
Which allow comforting known dimensions,
Though not exactly known.

II.

The opinion goes clear down past my socks
That we have introduced
The bastard idea of beginnings and ends
Into our ideas concerning the functions of the brain
And come up with something called free will
Which simply is not so.

III.

When we observe a reaction
And try to search out the action that prompted it
We are sometimes annoyed
To learn that the action we think we've found
Is only another reaction.
We are more annoyed
As we trace that reaction back to another reaction
And that reaction back to another reaction, etc.
After awhile we stop
And take our farthest removed reaction
And tell everyone else it is an action
And hope they won't be able to follow the business
Any farther back than we did.

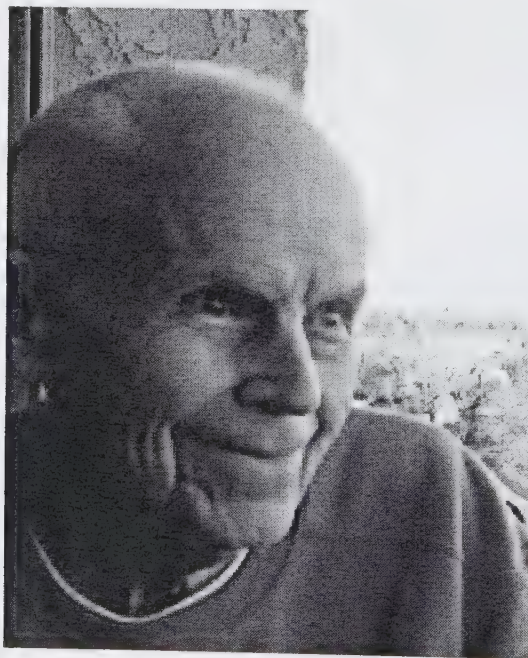
Within sight is humankind's inevitable move into the age of the infinite.

We will find freedom from unnecessary judging and other reflections of polarity, including political parties, which have institutionalized polarity. Our answers to social problems will all be beyond polarity; for example, a Life By Choice crusade to ensure that every conception is welcome.

Our scientists will move beyond any notions of the absolute speed of light (no limits), of an elementary particle (always something smaller), a Big Bang (no beginning) and an expanding universe (for something to expand there has to be a limit and there is no limit).

Our theologians will become aware that their most basic beliefs are the same as those of scientists and that we are all inseparably one, including our religions.

We will discover infinite resources, enabling the needs of all to be met, and our infinite possibilities will include the first real chance we've ever had for peace on Earth.



By the quadratic formula, the roots of a quadratic equation of the form $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$ are given by

$$r_1 = \frac{-b + \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a} \quad r_2 = \frac{-b - \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

Demonstrate algebraically that $r_1 * r_2 = \frac{c}{a}$

$$\left(\frac{-b + \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a} \right) \left(\frac{-b - \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a} \right)$$

$$\frac{b^2 + b\sqrt{b^2 - 4ac} - b\sqrt{b^2 - 4ac} - (\sqrt{b^2 - 4ac})^2}{4a^2}$$

$$\frac{b^2 - (\sqrt{b^2 - 4ac})^2}{4a^2}$$

$$\frac{b^2 - (b^2 - 4ac)}{4a^2}$$

$$\frac{b^2 - b^2 + 4ac}{4a^2}$$

$$\frac{4ac}{4a^2}$$

$$\frac{ac}{a^2} = \frac{1}{a} * \frac{c}{1} = \frac{c}{a}$$

$$\therefore \left(\frac{-b + \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a} \right) \left(\frac{-b - \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a} \right) = \frac{c}{a}$$

In the Garden this morning,
 One forgets there was such a thing as summer--
 Clouds thickening,
 A dull mist rolling in;
 Slowly the vines begin to darken,
 Soon the fruits lie tipped and rotting--
 Earth absolves,
 The great illusion passes.
 And, like farmers tilling before the spring,
 We begin anew.



Riverview: Longview Fibre from Cottonwood Island

Cathy Nist

What does discovery mean to you?

This land is so sexy, so lustful; that I wonder how any work gets done around here. I feel it. I am a cur in heat, tongue hanging out. I've got my ass in the air, begging McCarthy Creek to have its way with me.

I can't discern what's making me feel this way. Maybe it's the long days of summer shortening? Maybe it's the stripping trees? Maybe it's the fornicating grasshoppers? Maybe it's the almost tender sight of loose testicles resting on dryas? Maybe it's the nearly surreal thought of a group of women in their 30's watching a fine naked young man stoke their sauna and pour lavender oil for them? Maybe these are the things making me crazy for carnal knowledge of this ground. Making me lust for McCarthy Creek.

Yesterday, I mounted McCarthy Creek from the north side and stood on top, right in the middle. "I'm on top of you. You, creek, you." I wanted to say. "Bring it on, McCarthy Creek. I *know* you're big." But you just kept on moving. I heard you talking, but you didn't call my name.

I know I'm a groupie. I know you won't come easily. That if I want this, and I do, I'm going to have to become something larger than the size of my shadow. A carved-out cliff edge, a glacial crevasse, a mountainside cave. Maybe then you'd pay attention to me.

I've seen what you do to bridges. Three years ago in August, it was raining hard. And you were bothered. Tossing and turning, your waters ran high searching for purchase in human territory. I joined a crowd gathered at your edge and watched you pull a bridge off your back and toss it aside. The crowd gasped. Ahhhhhhh. Ohhhhhhh. Ummmm. You raged on. No one, no how, is going to shape you—make you fill a predetermined space. Your flanks are littered with wood and steel corsets you've burst of, refusing to be contained or held.

At night, I lie in my bed and listen to you sing. I think about loving you, you creek you. I want to know how many of your children I could carry on my hips. I dream of growing half-breeds made of skin, water, and rock in my womb. Growing larger and larger until the two of us become one. A river woman love child would be something to see.

I imagine what it would be like to know you. Would you break me or make me feel whole? Would your sound slow down once inside of me? Would your jagged bank cut or tickle? Would my crush on you crush me? Would I be able to breathe? Would I, too, ROAR?

Last night I opened the door to the Commissioner's Cabin and stepped outside. I followed the stone walkway out to the street and stood listening to the creek rage close by. Its waters slapping, flapping, roaring past, rolling like liquid thunder. I'm not sure how long I stood without moving, but after a while a sensation came over me. The one that says you are indeed moving along the trajectory that is meant to be your life. The one that says everything from the stars to the hairs on the back of your neck are in the right place. The one where your body fits snugly in its place in this jigsaw puzzle that is life as a human. The one that makes all other moments irrelevant. When reason is felt not but learned. The great ah ha. I stood there and looked out and saw my body. It was a great shadow cast over the street and up to the trees. A giant distortion of me looming grand in semi-darkness. This body. This conduit of my soul with which I walk through this life. Precious human body. House made for making meaning. I stumble about inside my mind, looking for linguistic solutions—ways to express what it is I know to be true. Know as I am standing that this moment is asking for expression. It is part of the deal, part of the path I am on. The creek is raging. My shadow towers. The night is light. The season is cool. I stretch and move into mountain pose. I ground my stocking feet to the smooth rock and reach up to the skies. A surge of power comes up from the soles of my feet and out my fingertips sending rays of energy out to the stars. I am part of the energy current. I am part of this rock I stand on. Okay, I tell myself. This is it. This is what you are supposed to capture in your mind. This is the image you must put to paper. But how to do this? How to capture bliss on the page? How to bring one's mind into print? How to give the visceral a language that suits her?



Ornate, and soft, her neck is laced with hands
and eyes of golden dart and race in fear.
She prays to make herself a better wife.
E-lab-or-ate on that! He shouts for night.

Her child depends on *him* to pay the bills.
She cakes her face with mud to cloak the years
and abrasions of fists and marks he makes.
Flesh-mask will hide the whiskey breath and tears.

Low night does come; orchids of pink collapse.
Mother, your eyes have turned and look for me!
Heavy, his potatoes and meat now sink-
a blossom withers upon a petal-ed floor.

Despite his thoughts of right and wrong, our Hell
is here--with him, and mums grow in Heaven.

Yes, I was his little Myrlie
And my mother named me Myrl too
But I've always written it Merle
Merle means European blackbird.

I like to listen to what the birds say.
They often talk with me.
Well I'll be darned, my birds like onions!
I just love red onions!

Today I want to visit the
man in Payson who raises birds.
My cockatiel Gandhi would love
a sensitive parakeet friend.

Don't understand why I keep them?
Frankly, my daughters can't either.
First they took little Freddy away
he was such a sexy dog.

Now they want the birds gone too because
they scatter seed in the sunroom.
Shirley, Glo, Pearl, Viv and Joan all
want my birds gone forever.

Oh mother! They shout out at me.
I just can't stop daring myself!
Even with a cane I enjoy life.
Liver spots all over my hands.

Feel these tumors under my hair.
My body has grown old, but my
spirit soars the same as ever.
As always I am myself.

My purple banana-seat bike?
No, it's long gone, no freedom here.
Imagine that! Them telling me!
I ruffled their feathers last week,

my old black bathing-suit's too big
My boob escaped in midair!
There I was swinging from the rope
at the Benjamin hot spring pool

dangling in the sky, the easy
way to fly! Everyone laughed
all except my uptight daughters
who are tired of me and my birds.

Looking down at my landed soul
"Who do you think you are old lady!"
"A young woman?" And here I am.
at one hundred and one years old.

Still refusing to die for them.

There is an old lady
That lives on the corner
I don't know her name
But someday I'm gonna

She wears stockings
Instead of her shoes
And howls at the moon
When the train goes
Choo Choo

She eats her lunch
At 9:00 in the morning
And tea she drinks while
pouring her coffee

She grows all her roses
All lined up in rows
And digs in her garden
With only her toes

She talks outloud
And waits while she listens
And agrees with herself
To go to the kitchen

She has a big hat
She wears for an hour
And after that it's
time for her shower

She paints all her sidewalks
But won't paint the fence
And climbs on the roof
If she wants to make sense

She'll invite you in
As she's closing the gate
And stands on her head
To make you wait

For as long as I remember
She's lived on that corner
I don't know her name
But someday I'm gonna

I shall wear white slacks and flowered shirts,
Or even bright red and green plaid slacks, like the golfers do.
I will spend my pension on books from remainder houses,
and from shops called `Twice Sold Tales` and such like,
and on strange little gadgets from mail order catalogs.
I'll wear a bola tie with a Western shirt, and maybe even jeans,
and not change out of them even to go to a restaurant.
And I'll flirt with the waitress, like I've always wanted to do.
I'll have a pipeful once in awhile.
even though I gave it up years ago.
And I'll stand up to the young punks-
I'll tell them they wouldn't be so cowardly
as to strike an old man, would they?
I'll wear the same pair of trousers for a week at a time,
as long as I don't spill anything on them.
And I'll stop throwing money away on formulas from Greece
and Hollywood, and just let my hair go gray.
I'll ride a city bus all the way out and back, just for the ride.
And I'll sleep late, and learn to slouch.
I hope all my friends will still love me,
when I am an old man.

Providence Seaside Hospital, April 2005

Her inside elbow's fragile skin
is yellow, stained with disinfectant,
and a purple bruise is spreading

on the back of her right hand
from the i.v. A fairy-tale hint of blush
has woken the ivory pallor

of her face. Her torso, propped up
in bed, leans to the left, head and neck slumped
over her shoulder like David's

"Death of Marat." Small puffs of breath
purse her grey mouth
with each shallow

exhalation. If you lean in close,
you notice she smells sweet,
the powdery scent of an infant. Outside,

spring's first swallows
bank and dive.

His last words burst, "I see a black light!"
and he died.

I felt gravity so great that nothing can escape
nothing can escape
not light not him

I watched massive stars shrinking
ending their lives,
ending his life,
a black hole sucking matter,
taking the stars from their space falling into black
squeezing to infinite density at the center of nothing
and he was nothing

and I heard tiny gill-branched *olms*
swimming subterranean waters
their white-shining bodies beaming to the dark;
my own light blackening them;
and I am blind
and they are blind eyes covered with skin,
and they swim
as he was swimming in blind light

and I touched black diamonds Carbonado
opaque and tough,
unable to absorb infrared
and they gleam past me small transparent windows
they gleam for him opaque and tough
Can he see beyond?

and I saw William Brandt's photo:
black and white London Blitz
a shelter of gloom waiting out bomb storms
and I smelled coal tar distilled to pitch

black and oily without light of rainbows
and gloom and rainbows are gone
gone for him

I remembered the Black Sea
the Russian city of Sebastopol
in the dark fires of the Crimean War
where his grandfather burned alive
and we all die
Should I be grateful he became merely lost
In Alzheimer's dark?

I saw black opals in the deserts of Australia
with crystals too fine to be detected
as were his dreams
as were mine for his peaceful death

I heard dark subway's rimmed floorboards
rattle and reflect tunneled light,
I heard the silence the loneliness of a long street
walled faceless,
like a stranger as was he to me

I saw New York's underground tunnels
descending to shadowed spectral light black light without horizon
disappearing lower and lower to constant twilight
70 stories deep into the earth 700 feet underground
three miles into the black of earth
where all becomes dust and he will be dust
he will become black earth

*oh river of darkness over me
wash away, wash away my sorrow...
oh that he will return a diamond,
an opal, a rainbow, a new born star.*

I wish I knew
If you like me
Like that

I wish I knew
How you feel

I wish I knew
What you smell like
How your arms feel
If you think of me
Like that

I like how it is now

I wish I knew
If wanting you
Having you
Would change things

And how much

And whether it is worth the risk

Just look at it
twist and curl in this shard
of eros light!

Herodias' daughter hovering above
my teacup, puckering her
tornado lips, spinning

toward union's evanescent bliss.
I cannot take my eyes from it!
A brisk circus of beauty,

distraction,
looping and diving on my desk.
Blank document open,

a lifetime of poems left
to write. But the light, the light
invades and I follow,

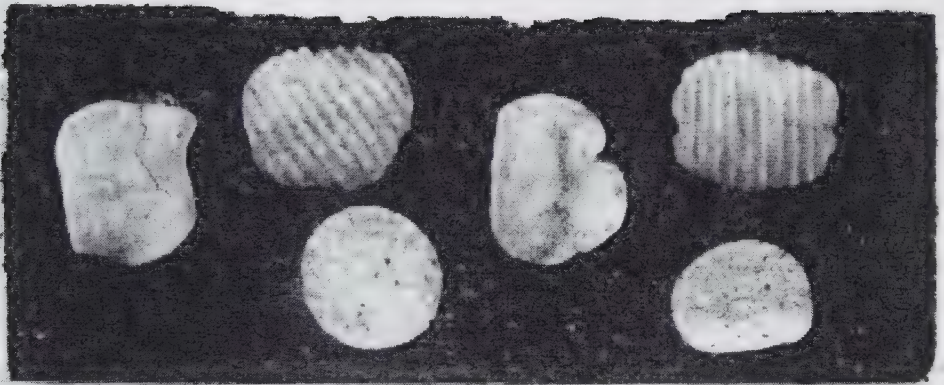
dizzy as a moth -- life's
work done -- rushing headlong
into surrender.





To belittle someone, to make oneself great,
Is to not understand, nor appreciate.
To only know and do, the actions that comes from hate.
To not be humane, how do you compensate
The agony that brings, when you eliminate.
All the things that make this world great.
Say if all the trees were oaks,
How plain the world would seem,
No maple syrup, banana splits,
And how would orange juice be?
Wouldn't it be a boring place?
If all the people were the same.
Just one color, just one language,
Just one family name.
But, if all the forest were the world
And all the people were the trees,
Palm and pine, bamboo and willow
Live and grow in harmony.
Aren't you glad, my friend
Different though we be.
I learn from you and you learn from me.
But still,
To belittle someone is to
Only hear, what you want to hear,
Not the message that seems to appear.
We are all born,
And we all die.
Whether rich or poor,
Boy or girl.
To belittle someone is to be ignorant
How can one tolerate
The people that discriminate,
and people that associate,
With clans we don't appreciate.
How can one go through life,
After causing so much fights.
To look down on someone,

Is to bring upon, a cruel wrong.
To belittle someone is to be blind,
To not see what happens from time to time.
People in houses quarter till 9.
Cause of the fear, of those who do crime.
So do not live up to people's standards
Rather only live up to your own
For this world is not only mine
It's yours.



Chips on a Shingle

Mary Hill

It
was found among
the crumbled papers and dusty
hairpins, unclaimed pennies and
wads of kleenex.

I wondered

how many times had her
fingers,
her eyes
lovingly passed over
it
to consider, and whisper
no, not now
not today
I still love you

It
would be tucked
back in the cupboard, no longer
useful, just
loved.

the tipsy candles, the missing rhinestone pendant
the card from a long-lost friend.

It
remained secure in her faithful
presence and slept soundly in
her forgetfulness.

It,
the proof, the litter of life.

It.

The seduction in the special shop,
the color

of dazzle,

the smell of exotic.

It,

the collections of devotion
and trust, faithfulness in

a bud vase

sentiment in the empty pen.

**

Later

we found

it

a crumbly bun hiding out in her
closet.

The secrets,
the madness,
the lies.

It

went on trial

as we pawed

through old clothes, bags

of garbage, photos and scribbled notes

and we said without thinking,

"Why do people save these things?"

the unlidded teapot

the broken angel

My shopping cart is littered with ads
Torn and wasted
Left behind by harried customers
Much like me

I pull my shopping list from the pocket of my jacket
Eggs milk bread
Detergent

As I look around at the microcosm of humanity
Which is nestled here in this retail world
And wonder at the variety I see

An exhausted young mother pushes a super cart
Loaded with scuffling children
Canned goods and sweetened cereal
Frustration and maternal pride
Compete for her emotions
On her overweight flushed pink face

Two elderly gentlemen
Swap health stories
Each taking his blood pressure
At the machine beside the pharmacy

A bored cashier
Too tired to be rude
Scans each item
Prays for the end of her shift
Shifting from one sore foot to the other

In the outdoor nursery
A green refuge from the retail boredom within
New life quietly grows
Unable to resist
I pick up a bright red geranium
For my own kitchen window

In the toy department
A lone child
Separated from his mother
Works at destroying a toy
He believes he will never own

Meanwhile a studious gentleman
Gazes over the rim of his glasses
Searching through the new paperbacks
Seeking vitality
Between the covers of a book

A middle-aged couple
Shop the health food aisle
With its promise to live forever
If only they knew
Which vitamin or herb to take
As they seek the magic bullet

A seasoned housewife
Picks among the produce
Seeking only the best
Measuring the importance of life
One cabbage at a time

A young bride touches the linens
Terry towels soft with first lint
Sheets with their promise of sensuality
The wonder of her future in her eyes

As her nesting instincts
Long dormant now come alive
She wanders into the infants wear
Guided by her dreams
As her heart ascends to the next stair of life

I gaze in sweet identification
As I listen to each voice
Each of us singing our own song
Alone and yet together
Our melodies of daily bread

Mother died last summer
After longing for death
She finally got her wish
Her release

Old age became her enemy
Surrounded by strangers
However kind and well-intentioned
Strangers none the less
All of her friends had already gone

None of her children could take care of her
And I don't believe she ever truly understood

She spent her last years recanting
Preparing
Seeking to understand her own behavior
Often a stranger to herself

Lonely and frequently feeling abandoned
Her psychic pain made her unreasonable
And often unlovable

Her physical pain
As well as the ravages of old age
Got the upper hand in her life
As she sunk into bitterness

Her acidity and anger colored it all
Every aspect of her life
Robbing every visit
Every phone call
Every relationship

She did have that rare good day
Filled with sweet memories
Less and less concerned with the present
Unable to remember the names of her great grandchildren

It was strange though
Because my sister became ill
In another town
Far away from Mother

My sister was always frightened of death
I remember when Dad died
She ran from his open grave
Trembling with fear
An overly strict childhood filled with
Hell and damnation Sunday school had left its mark

As Mother's life ebbed away
Worn by age and the ravages of life
My sister
Mother's first born
Also waged her own mortal battle

Unbeknown to each other
They died
On the same day
Only hours apart

Perhaps it is an easier journey
If you are accompanied by someone you love
I know for my sister it was
Perhaps for Mother it was also

At least I like to think it was

Now when I remember both of them
A strange happening has occurred
Forgotten are the pain and the irascible behavior

I remember them physically with dark
Raven colored hair untouched by gray
I recall the happier days
Mother's head thrown back in laughter
At some nonsense my Dad had executed
My sister tall and beautiful as she once was
And perhaps is
Once again

embers
at the edge of ocean
bark-embedded memories
red canyon sparks
disappear
on cold wind



These Walls

Sue Falkner Wood

High on a hill
A gust of sweet damp river air
Washes past the antiquated redwood frame
Through the moldering wallpaper
Disrupting ancient dust

Her new occupants have a wee child
Loud raucous wails balanced
By laughter and childish glee

Tiny running feet
Shake loose dust and sand
Left behind by former occupants

Lace curtains feathered by the breeze
Softly stroke the leaded glass and wooden frame
In a caress that is rhythmic and soothing

Memories swirl like the wind
Inside the heart of her
Within her walls
Some harmonious with life
Others tragically out of tune

Three children were born here
They crawled
They walked
Eventually leaving her behind

They marked growth on her walls
Carved initials into her doorframes
Scraped knees on her stairs

Three deaths occurred
Within these walls
One a peaceful end to a long life
The other two resonate in her depths
Their tragedy rocking her to the rafters
Like an earthquake

The handsome captain out to sea
His raven haired wife "in a family way"
Left behind to incubate

The day the pains began she was alone
There were no telephones
Wooden sidewalks crusted with ice
The only neighbor yards away
Across a knee deep muck mired street

She crawled to the door
Cried out for help
Her whimpering pleas muffled
By the whine of a piercing arctic wind

She lost her life
And her unborn child that day

The captain arrived home to emptiness
Loss so deeply felt
He returned to sea
And left his shattered heart behind
Within these walls

He sold to a burly Irish barkeep
With a plump young wife
And six freckle-faced children
For a time laughter lived
Beneath her roof

She yearns to make peace with the sad times
While savoring the joyous ones
Because she knows
Acts of love are perfect
Because they cannot die
And will resonate forever
Within her walls

At about nine o' clock the morning of April 29th, 1992 the Viva Market closed. Boarded up the windows with plywood and closed. This market never closed. 24 hours a day. 7 days a week. As far back as I could remember. It was always open. This was at least four hours before the verdict came down.

Rodney King was bludgeoned half to death by a gang of rogue Los Angeles police officers late in 1991 after a high speed pursuit. The cops used nightsticks, fists, and feet. Racial slurs were broadcast over the police band, and broadcast back (!?) from the station. This particular incident was unique in that it had been witnessed and videotaped. What wasn't unique was how the rest of this scenario played itself out.

All the cops involved in this beating were white, the recipient, Rodney King, black. The videotape had been released to the press, and was, to say the least, incredibly brutal. A change of venue for the trial was granted, and the hearing was moved from L.A. to Simi Valley in neighboring Ventura County. The entire population of Los Angeles was dumbfounded. Simi Valley was an upscale suburb housed largely by LAPD officers and their families. It was the belly of the LAPD beast. The chances of finding a fair and balanced jury in this town were bleak. When the jury was selected, South Central went silent.

It was deathly still in the city for the week preceding the riots. It seems now that everybody anticipated the worst. On the morning of April 29th, the day the riots began, I needed some gas for my '64 Dart. The TV was saying prepare to vacate, and with a four year old daughter at home I didn't take that advice lightly. I set out. I probably drove by twenty stations and nearly 15 miles before I found a gas station that even had any gas. All the way from the Mid City District to Beverly Hills. On my way back to Mid City the verdict was released. LAPD cleared: All counts. No excessive force used in the arrest. Pockets of the city went ballistic.

My Dart was stopped by a police roadblock at Arlington and Olympic. After having to prove I was a resident, I was allowed to return to Hoover Street, under escort. About the time I got home, Reginald Denny was being pulled from his truck in the intersection of Florence and Normandie, a couple of miles away. His crime was being white in a sea of black, and he was consumed. The beating delivered to this truck driver made the Rodney King beating pale in comparison and touched off the worst rioting in L.A. history.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the boards installed over the windows of the Viva Market were removed by an increasingly aggressive mob. It was strange how absent the cops were. By 4 pm the crowd in the vicinity of the store had swelled to about four or five hundred people, and everybody that drove by was stopping to either watch or join the mayhem. Bricks, rocks, and tools were being thrown at the windows, and people were just stopping their cars in the middle of the street and jumping out. A couple of cholos started kicking in the doors and were soon joined by a huge crowd. Still no cops. The first items to get boosted from the market were disposable diapers. Then beer, then liquor. Then it was a feeding frenzy, with the store being completely gutted from floor to ceiling within maybe two hours. The vatos started lighting a fire, but the building wouldn't burn. Automatic sprinklers probably did as much damage as fire would have done to the store. There was a foot deep lake in the market for the whole three days of the riots.

The crowd moved from one end of the block to the other. In reality, it wasn't even a crowd anymore, but a huge out-of-control swarm of pissed-off locusts, feeding off of or destroying everything in their path. The opposite corner, the intersection of Pico and Hoover, housed a huge variety of small businesses and indoor swap meets. Everything in these businesses was looted and the buildings set ablaze. Rioters even hit up the local livestock market. People were running down the street with caged guinea hens and exotic chickens. I don't even know what they used them for.

It was about eight o'clock at this point, and the fire department and the police had finally shown up. The police were only concerned with one thing as it turned out: to protect the fire department as they attempted to control the many fires burning. Rocks, bottles, bricks, and stray bullets rained down on them constantly throughout the course of the riots. The cops were completely out gunned and overwhelmed during this period and only looking out for themselves and the firefighters. Other than that, the cops were ineffectual. Absolutely.

The first night of the riots was the scariest for us, because everything was so totally out of control. It was complete chaos, and anything could happen. Our house was a three story Victorian built in 1903, which had been used in a Buster Keaton silent film in the teens. Gypsy Rose Lee's home was a block up from us, and Edward G. Robinson's estate was in the immediate area. This was a stunning old L.A. neighborhood with a rich past—all going up in flames.

My fear in our house was fire. The area had developed a chronic gang problem, so we had installed bars and steel mesh doors on the whole lower level of the house. Getting out quickly was a problem. Being outside at night was bad, really bad. The

air was completely unbreathable because of the smoke. Unfortunately, we were not permitted to leave the area either. Martial law had been declared, but chaos ruled.

I spent all night the first two nights of the riots hosing down the roof of the house and garage, as there were floating cinders landing on the cedar shake. I was armed only with an antique Colt 45 handgun that I had never fired. I wasn't even sure it could be fired. The days were calmer, so I tried to sleep short periods during the day. My only concern was getting me, my daughter and my girlfriend through this fiasco in one piece. That and maybe keeping the family home from burning down.

I could write endlessly about all the individual acts of madness I witnessed during those days. Utter anarchy is not a cool situation to be in. I saw a fireman get shot while doing his job, amongst other things. Shooting a fireman is despicable and unacceptable. It was beyond absurd. On the third day, the rioting kind of fizzled out. Or maybe there was just nothing left to steal or burn. That day was first time I saw the National Guard. They were busy until then protecting the west side from the rioters. That's where the money is at. The tanks rolled right down Hoover St. My daughter waved. I didn't.

The riots were over, but the neighborhood never recovered. Everything that burned was bulldozed, and to this day has never been rebuilt. The Viva Market didn't reopen for over a year after the riots, and never was open all night again. My girlfriend's mother sold the house to a group of Koreans. Both my daughter and her mother had been born in that old Victorian. They poured concrete over the lawn and subdivided the house into apartments. She got 92K for a 6 bedrooms house that could have sold for 1 4 million in 1990.

Many years have passed and many newer tragedies have pushed the LA riots from our minds. One question still sticks with me though. Rodney asked it: "Can't we all just get along?" Obviously we can't.

Addendum: I, too, am guilty of looting. In return for watching a gentleman's car while he looted six cases of Budweiser, I accepted two packages of Entenmanns from him. He was black, I am white. It wasn't all about racism. My sincere apologies to Viva Market. We also took many photographs of this dark period, which were handed over to Thrifty Drug Company for development. In those rolls of film were photos of cops who were not protecting and serving. They were all returned to us exposed. Free of charge. Weird, huh?



Pat Butterworth, Patsy Chapel, Jeannette Davis, Irene Drage, Tony Gardner, Lou Kister, Meghann Lynch, Bridget Rodasky, Tommy Rogers, Dawn Stevick, Chasmin Stover

To look upon your soft yet deep green eyes
And it is though I lay upon the sun.
Sweet dreams to drift do not seem to pass by.
They stay and wait inside my mind to run.

A love so true and fine yet weak it seems
By heart and hand we walk together dead.
In soul and truth the words will float in dreams,
Alive in worlds so far away instead.

I wish to have the soul that keeps my heart.
It seems I shall not have this life to live,
I keep this love too close to me from start,
I don't know how much more I have to give.

This love of mine will not begin to cease,
Until his love is mine my heart is creased.

Avoid me.

Ignore me.

Do what you have to do.

Disdain me.

Evade me.

It's good you found something new.

Omit me.

Scorn me.

Your silence cuts so deep.

Reject me.

Forget me.

My pain is mine to keep.

for Carolyn

In singing we
in our equivocal existence
rise to the sphere
of angels
(and birds)
thrusting at
the firmament
pure and fleeting notes
of our rejoicing
comforting and grieving.
Not the diva whose
coloratura trajectory
is, of course, praiseworthy,
but the common woman
who sings nursery rhymes
and lullabies
to her children
sings hymns
in the house of God
(and elsewhere)
sings in the kitchen
of a sick friend
while warming a soup
and doing the dishes

who sings
by the deathbed
of her father
with wavering breath
lifting him
to lightness.

Driving my high school girlfriend home,
I turned into a church parking lot.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm taking a short cut."

"There's no road here!"

"Well, there should be!"

And I headed out across a field
in my father's 1970 Chevrolet Vega,
green with the white racing stripe
up the center of the hood.

At the other end of the field
the car did a high-step dance
as each wheel dropped down the curb
onto the street.

She laughed.

It was a wild and uncontrollable laughter
as free as falling water,
as sudden and intense as a bird startled into flight.
It could have been framed and hung on a wall,
or set as a diamond into a ring,
it was that beautiful.

It still rings in my ears today,
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That laugh was as good as it gets.

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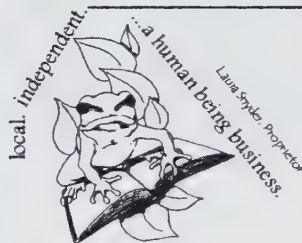
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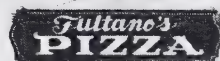


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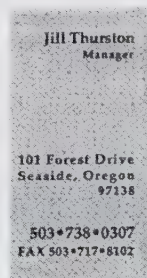


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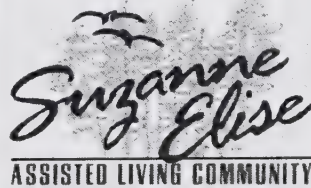
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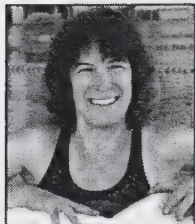


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